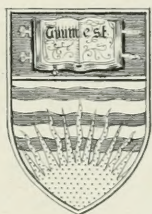


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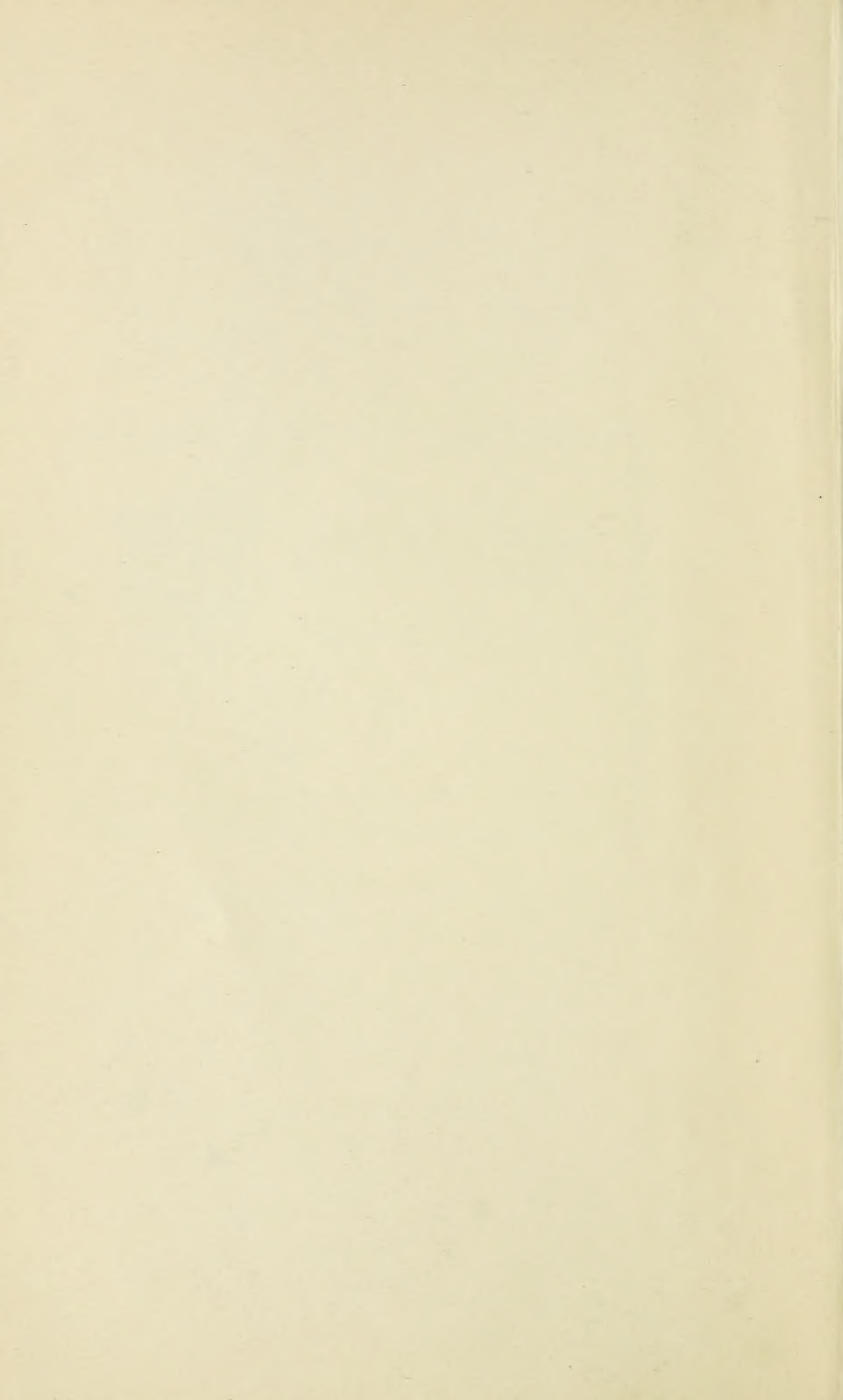
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THE LEARNED KNIFE



THE LEARNED KNIFE

AN ESSAY ON
SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES

BY
LAWRENCE HYDE



GERALD HOWE LIMITED

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1928

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Social and civic ideals, as such, in so far as they are not organically connected with moral ideas, but exist by themselves like a separate half cut off from the whole by your LEARNED KNIFE; in so far, finally, as they may be taken from the outside and successfully transplanted to any other place, in so far as they are a separate 'institution,' such ideals, I say, neither have, nor have had, nor ever could have, any existence at all! For what is a social ideal, and how shall we understand the word? Surely its essence lies in men's aspiration to find a formula of political organization for themselves which shall be faultless and satisfactory to all—is it not so? But people do not know the formula. Though they have been searching for it through the six thousand years of history, they cannot find it. . . .

And we may ask the scornful themselves: If our hope (of redemption through Christ) is a dream, when will you build up your edifice and order things justly by your intellect alone, without Christ? If they declare that it is they who are advancing towards unity, only the simple-hearted among them believe it, so that one may positively marvel at such simplicity. Of a truth, they have more phantastic dreams than we. . . .

F. M. DOSTOEVSKY
(1821-1881)



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THE LEARNED KNIFE

INTRODUCTION

WE are living to-day in a remarkable mental atmosphere, an atmosphere which not only permits, but positively encourages, the luxuriation of the most monstrous psychological growths; on all sides we are confronted with subtly disguised materialistic thought, with vague humanism, with muddled idealism, with Rousseauistic dreaming, and, above all, with pseudo-spirituality in all its forms. The reflective among us are becoming more deeply conscious with every year that passes of the need for the creation of something like a Critique of Values, a norm to which such aberrations can be referred.

The task of elaborating such a Critique is attended, however, by formidable difficulties. It is hardly necessary to point out, for example, that the critic of values, unlike the mathematician or the analytical chemist, is obliged to appeal to the immediate intuitions of his readers, and not merely to their reason alone. If they disagree with him he can do nothing except console himself with the reflection that their qualitative judgments are, no less than his own, subject to correction by more refined sensibility. Again, in the nature of the case he is obliged to take his stand on a very definite philosophical basis; it is impossible for him to deal with wrong-headed principles effectively unless he is doing so in the light of very definite principles of his own. It is of little use for him to come forward with a mere collection of uncorrelated impressions and prejudices as to what is beautiful, desirable, or true. His conclusions must be organically related to one another, his arraignment made from the point of view of radical and clearly thought-out considerations. What is essential, indeed, is

that he should be consistent and honest in his thinking; the particular nature of the ground on which he has taken up his stand is of subsidiary significance.

As to this particular essay, the foundation on which it is based is that of a complete acceptance of the general principles of religion, by which I mean that organization of our experience of the transcendental, which it is especially the business of the philosopher of religion to elaborate. That general principles which are deduced from a survey of a wide range of types of religious experience can be both definite and illuminating in character is apparent, I think, from the work of writers like Baron von Hügel and Dr Rudolph Otto. Their essential significance lies, I believe, not so much in any assistance which they may offer to the religious individual in the work of understanding himself, as in their power to exhibit by contrast the limitations of the naturalistic and humanistic attitudes to experience.

Nevertheless, if anything which can legitimately be described as a philosophy is present in this book, it is present for the most part only in an implicit form. It is characteristic of the religious outlook that it will not bear being submitted to the same degree of systematization as that of the pure philosopher or the scientist. And, again, the appeal of the book is to the intuitive feelings of the reader—a circumstance which renders it necessary to avoid anything like a too precise definition of terms. He will, I hope, come to understand the significance which I attach to them by taking note of the way in which they are employed in different connections.

With regard to the plan of the book, this volume constitutes the first section of a work which will examine in turn three fairly clearly defined approaches to the social problem: that from the angle of science, that from the angle of humanism, and that from the angle of religion itself. I have begun with science. My reason for this is

simple enough: It is my conviction that in their attitude to the problems of man and society the great majority of modern sociologists exhibit—largely, it is true, unconsciously and by implication; but the manifestation is none the less serious for that reason—a positively calamitous insensitiveness to the deeper values of the spiritual life. If I am correct in this supposition, it follows that the need for an analysis of the principles on which they are working is extremely urgent. And this is particularly the case since, to make matters worse, such disciplines as eugenics, psychology, economics, and social science are at the present time enjoying a vastly exaggerated prestige.

Any criticism which takes the form of charging people with deficiencies in perception is at the best a delicate business. And this is particularly true in the present instance. For by their repudiation of spiritual values our modern sociologists have placed anyone who attempts to contest their findings in an embarrassing position. Such a person is obliged either to accept their conclusions in silence—which is what most people who are at all sensitive are inclined to do—or, if he purposes to be aggressive, to counter them by pointing to considerations which are of such a nature that in the ordinary course of events they should never have to be referred to at all in such a direct way. By this I mean that he is driven back on appealing to principles which should properly be expressed only by the creation of works of art or in the conduct of a life, and not exposed in this manner in their nudity. The normal and most effective method of opposing error in this field is that of simply affirming the truth without entering into argument with its detractors; the attitude adopted by the spiritual philosopher should in ordinary circumstances be that of Spinoza, who announced that 'it was contrary to his habits to seek out the errors into which others had fallen.'

Unfortunately, however, the situation with which we

have to deal is of an exceptional nature. The minds of educated men and women to-day are being bewildered to a painful degree by a mass of conclusions, speculations, and theories which have their source in a distorted conception of the nature of human beings and their relationships. They are caught in a web from which they can only be extricated by the laborious method of unravelling an enormous number of extremely complicated psychological tangles. We have, in fact, reached a point at which the mere presentation of correct principles without any reference to their distortion in the hands of unscrupulous or unenlightened thinkers will not by itself suffice to produce illumination. It is necessary that the attack on superior values which is implicit in such thinking should be met at every point, that the nature of the issues involved should be exhibited in the clearest possible way, that the principles which are at stake should be defined with the maximum degree of precision. The process entails an insistence on all sorts of points which should never have to be underscored in this harsh and uncompromising manner.

All that one can hope for is that the development of the modern consciousness will in an appreciable time render recourse to such methods unnecessary. But I must admit that, for myself, I find it difficult to entertain such a belief. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that we are only at the beginning of a long struggle against materialistic thought, a struggle which will be all the more exhausting for the reason that such thought is to-day being expressed not, as was the case in the last century, in the field of physics, but in studies such as psychology and eugenics where its power to misrepresent the nature of reality is immeasurably more potent, and its influence infinitely more difficult to detect.

Nor, I must confess, does the solution of the problem which I am offering in this book constitute anything in

the nature of an easy way out of the difficulty. Its thesis is that nothing effective will ever be done in the way of reforming society until individual men and women are prepared to concentrate once more upon those facts of the inner life which are receiving such inadequate attention from an excessively 'extraverted' Age. This means that every person who is really desirous of contributing to the creation of a new social order will be compelled to that reorganization of his nature which religion has always insisted upon as the prelude to any truly creative activity. And it signifies, again, that he will be obliged to pass through a period of painful internal chaos; there is no other transition from the naturalistic to the spiritual plane than by way of such a condition. And even when he has come to concentrate primarily on the inner instead of the outer world, he is thereby brought face to face with problems which are infinitely more perplexing than any which beset him on the level of common sense. I have touched on the question in the course of this enquiry. But it would have been out of place to develop it at length. We are concerned in these pages with an earlier stage in the process of regeneration: that of the emancipation of the mind from its servitude to rationalistic and naturalistic ideas. And that is more than enough for one book.

CHAPTER I

OUR MODERN VALUES

I

OF all the themes that can engage the attention of the modern mind there is probably none which is by this time more threadbare than that of Social Reform. Every library in the world contains row after row of books on this enormous and inexhaustible problem—and the great majority of them are almost completely unreadable. Yet there is no contemporary problem which is more urgent in character, no subject which would seem to call more naturally for the co-operation of the best minds which the Race has produced. How has this curious situation been brought about?

We are, all of us, needless to say, thoroughly dissatisfied with the values of our modern culture. The civilization which we have built up exhibits all sorts of features which are so ugly and disquieting that they are capable of causing even the most unimaginative person to pause and reflect; there are many among us who even go so far as to predict its complete downfall. The need for reconstruction is patent enough.

Yet the attempts which have so far been made to bring this reconstruction about are all of such a nature that they cannot but leave one profoundly uneasy. They have about them an intolerably mechanical and extemporized character; in no case do they go to the roots of the matter at issue—and this for a reason which has only become at all apparent to us in recent years.

Almost all orthodox efforts at social reform are doomed at the outset to failure, because they attempt to employ for the reconstruction of society the very weapons which were previously utilized to create it: the particular scientific mode of the mind, to the exercise of which we owe the

existing state of our civilization, is being used for the purpose of remedying the defects which that civilization exhibits; the rational, organizing mind is doing its best to deal with the deplorable results of its own past activity. In a word, the forces which served to bring about the present condition of society are being, as it were, turned upon it again with the object of healing its wounds.

This cannot but be a hopeless procedure. For the present state of civilization is due not, as so many naïve people imagine, to the fact that scientific calculation and organization have not been pushed far enough, but to the fact that existing conditions are the product of a one-sided interest in life, the expression of our initial neglect of certain considerations of a very important order. And until these considerations are duly appreciated all the efforts on the part of politicians, psychologists, eugenicists, and sociologists to patch up the situation must necessarily remain fruitless.

It is slowly being borne in upon us that the civilization in which we are at present living is more than anything experimental in character, that it represents the consequences of a magnificent, but extremely hazardous, enterprise of the human spirit. That enterprise may be said to have begun with the extraversion of the European mind at the close of the Middle Ages—a compensatory movement, corrective of that excessive concern with the inside instead of the outside of things which was responsible at once for the glories and the limitations of Medievalism. The ultimate result of this alteration in the focus of our attention was the birth of modern Science—and the form of our existing culture. And now, after less than three centuries, that culture is beginning to exhibit disconcerting indications of the fact that it has its roots, not in the complete human consciousness, but in a painfully one-sided development of the discursive faculty of the mind. We are realizing that the impetus away from the contempla-

tive life of the Middle Ages has taken us too far in the opposite direction; the human mind has once more failed to resist its characteristic tendency towards over-compensation. It is becoming clear that we have paid for our passionate concern with the objective, concrete aspects of existence by an ignorance of spiritual principles which may, if we are not careful, result in the collapse of the whole system. The nature of the situation has been stated fairly enough by Prof. Irving Babbitt in the following passage from his *Democracy and Leadership* (p. 14):

The only thing that finally counts in this world is a concentration, at once imaginative and discriminating, on the facts. Now the facts that one may perceive and on which one may concentrate are not only infinite in number, but of entirely different orders. This is one reason why material progress, so far from assuring moral progress, is, on the contrary, extremely difficult to combine with it. This progress has been won by an almost tyrannical concentration on the facts of natural law. Man's capacity for concentration is limited, so that the price he has paid for material progress has been an increasing inattention to facts of an entirely different order—those, namely, of the human law. The resulting spiritual blindness has been an invitation to Nemesis.

This discovery of the dangerous lop-sidedness of our existing culture is an entirely modern development. It has been brought about, more than anything, by the break-up at the beginning of the century of what may be termed the Victorian complex of thought. The history of that break-up need not be detailed in these pages; it is by now familiar to all educated people. It is sufficient to recall here that we have now come to see that the thinking of the nineteenth century was unduly mechanical in character—one of the consequences of the unquestioned ascendancy enjoyed at the time by a certain type of scientific thought, of an order which has now been completely superseded. This supersession came about as

the result of the remarkable developments which have taken place in the field of physics. The scientists, by pushing their enquiries to the furthest possible limit, have reached the point of realizing the nature of the limitations under which they are called upon to work. The universe which is presented to our minds by modern Science is now seen to be very largely an arbitrary creation of the mind: the result of our prejudices in the matter of clocks and measuring rods. Physics has been shown to be a closed, cyclic system of interdependencies, not even fully consistent with itself, and only evolved at the cost of leaving 'values' entirely out of account. The universe is no longer thought of as a machine which is set in motion by the operation of blind, mechanical forces. The 'iron laws of Nature' have disappeared. Even such a sturdy concept as that of 'matter' is being replaced by the notion of 'organism.' Science is seen to deal with the structure of the world and not with its substance.*

These developments in the sphere of physics have exercised a profound influence upon contemporary thought. In the light of this demonstration of the tendency of the mind to create arbitrary abstractions for its own purposes we find ourselves regarding with increasing suspicion the conclusions which have been reached by thinkers in all sorts of other fields. We are on our guard against undue conceptual rigidity, against any attempt to distort the nature of the actual situation in the interests of consistency

* The point which I wish to stress here is not that the new developments in physics have altogether deprived materialism of its classical basis (a questionable assertion), but that they have at least brought home to us the fact that the scientist's picture of the universe is arrived at by a more violent process of abstraction than we had suspected. Hence our inclination to attach more weight than before to the testimony of the poets and mystics. Beyond this point we cannot, I think, safely venture.

or systematization. We are becoming aware of the difference between the complexity of reality and the presentments which we make to ourselves of it in terms of ideas.

But this is by no means all. We are realizing also that mechanism on the plane of thought is the direct expression of naturalism on the plane of the feelings. One is the complement of the other. They represent, in fact, twin manifestations of a falling away from a more central and spiritual conception of life. As our understanding of this fact increases we are becoming more and more critical of the emotional elements in the Victorian complex. It is being brought home to us that we have inherited from the nineteenth century not only a system of ideas which distorts the nature of reality, but, in addition, a set of emotional values of a very questionable order. It is appearing that the ideas which we entertain as to what is fitting, desirable, finally satisfying, are in need of the most careful scrutiny; they have their origin in the unconscious desires of the undisciplined and unilluminated soul; they are romantic, mutually contradictory, and without any proper spiritual basis.

As a consequence, we find that critical minds are scrutinizing with increasing attention all those ideas—civilization, progress, social service, liberty, democracy, evolution, solidarity, co-operation, and the like—which collectively represent the substitute offered to the modern man for that profound philosophy of spiritual things which was developed by the despised Middle Ages. We are becoming interested in the difference between the products of vague, expansive emotion and those of disciplined insight.

Nor is this the end of the matter. Although scientific naturalism, regarded as an adequate explanation of the relation of man to the rest of the universe, is to-day completely out of date, we are making the unpleasant discovery that the same spirit which produced that particular manifestation in the field of general ideas is at work again in

the more restricted spheres of sociology and anthropology: the conclusions which are being arrived at by the men who are engaged in research in these newly developed sciences are becoming suspect for us on account of the nature of the qualitative judgments which they imply. The psychological foundations of the Science of Man are evidently in need of very careful inspection. Materialism is expressing itself again in another form, and one, moreover, in which it can only too easily escape detection.

2

All this, however, represents only the negative phase of this new orientation of our thought. Equally definite tendencies are to be observed in a positive direction.

Nothing is more characteristic of the time than the efforts which are being made by so many modern thinkers to arrive at a synthetic conception of Reality, a conception which will do justice both to that aspect of it which was over-stressed by mechanistic thought and that which is realized by refined emotion.* The following extract from the prospectus written by Mr Middleton Murry for his journal, *The New Adelphi*, seems to me to express very clearly the nature of the aims which writers of this tendency have set before themselves:

The possibility of this subjective synthesis in the individual involves the supersession of the familiar mechanistic psychology by a dynamic psychology: subjective synthesis and objective synthesis are interdependent. If intellect and emotion, mind and heart, are capable of integration in the individual man, then the objects of those faculties, the intelligible universe of science and the awe- or love-inspiring universe of religion are likewise capable of integration. Their apparent irreconcilability is due not to the objects themselves, but to the limitations which we impose upon them: in the case of the universe of science, the limitations of the mechanistic concept, in the

* Cf. *Reality*, by Dr Streeter (1926).

case of the universe of religion, the limitation of a merely emotional response. In either case the unique and given reality is distorted, and men, finding their distortions incapable, as they must be, of being reconciled, become the prey of a growing inward distress, or take refuge in the arbitrary exclusiveness either of rationalism or emotionalism. They exaggerate part of the one reality into the whole; and the part, by this exaggeration, is no longer even real.*

The point of view which is formulated in intellectual terms in the above passage is that of an increasing number of educated men and women to-day. Not, of course, that they are able to give themselves such a clear account of the matter at issue—that is the privilege of a superior mind. But it is at least true to say that, although they may be largely unconscious of it themselves, their thinking about modern problems is becoming more and more determined by considerations of such an order. They are moving irresistibly towards an appreciation of the fact that—to put the matter in the plainest possible terms—the mind working alone without the heart can of itself never arrive at any conclusions regarding human problems which really touch the vital issues involved. This realization is in most minds at present partial and intermittent. But it is there, and I believe it to be growing. I believe that more and more people are feeling out towards a solution of the social problem which shall be simple, and, at the same time, satisfy not only the calculating head, but the deeper yearnings of the spirit. In other words, the whole man must somehow be involved in the enterprise; society, such people feel, must be reconstituted by each individual's working from his own centre and on his immediate environment. Somehow or other the deepening and enriching of the person's private life must be brought into immediate and fruitful relation with the regeneration of the

* Compare an article by the same writer in *The Monthly Criterion* for June, 1927, entitled 'Towards a Synthesis.'

whole. Or, to put the matter more effectively, the individual is demanding that his labour for the good of all shall take the form of increasing the fulness of his unique personal life. What almost every type of social reform offers him instead at the present time is, however, a mutilation of this completeness: he is called upon to work for an abstract aim, an aim which is abstract at least in relation to the immediacy and complexity of his own existence—the only thing with which he is really competent to deal, because it is the only thing which he knows about at first hand. The rest is theory. Invariably it is suggested to him, directly or by implication, that the reconstruction of society is to be brought about, not in terms of the perfecting of the lives of a host of individuals by those individuals themselves, but in terms of the perfection of something which proves on analysis to have no more than a chimerical existence. The attitude which opposes itself to this mechanical conception of the problem lays stress by contrast upon exactly those factors in the human situation which science, by the nature of its methods, is obliged to leave out of account.

People are losing faith in all attempts to refashion society which involve nothing more than a process of resourceful organization. It is becoming more and more evident that however ingeniously you plan, however sane and enlightened the principles which you lay down, you cannot do away with the great fact of Original Sin,* which is perpetually producing manifestations which render the results of your planning almost nugatory. Socialism is certainly no panacea for the widespread human affliction of acquisitiveness; nor, as America is engaged in showing the world, does a democratic constitution ensure immunity from injustice and the most

* In speaking of 'Original Sin,' I am not alluding to any theological dogma, but simply employing a convenient term for symbolizing men's latent capacity for evil.

outrageous forms of tyranny. So that, even from this point of view, you are driven back to the need for the self-perfection of the individual. The optimistic will dispute the point. I will not argue with them here. This book is addressed primarily to those people who are more than ordinarily conscious of the need at the present juncture in the development of our civilization for what I can only describe as starting again at the beginning—with personal regeneration.

That consciousness is already making itself felt. We are to-day being confronted on all sides with a marked recrudescence of interest in the problems of the inner life. The more enlightened among us are engaged in a search for values of a more fundamental order than those which are being offered the world by the social reformer, the socialist and the liberal theorist. They are beginning to experiment seriously with the possibilities of introverted, as opposed to extraverted, attention. They are turning away from the over-organized mental world of rationalism* to explore the relatively unknown world within.

* The terms 'rationalism' and 'rationalistic' are not employed in this essay in any precise philosophical sense. I have used them as being the most convenient symbols available to denote the attitude of that type of mind which in drawing its conclusions attaches excessive weight to tangible, concrete evidence, as opposed to that other type of evidence which, although no less significant, is in character vague, elusive, and generally more easily 'sensed' than clearly apprehended. To say that the person who attributes importance to this second type of evidence relies more on his 'feelings' than on his 'reason' is simply to introduce confusion into the whole question. In both cases it is the Reason which is exercised in classifying and interpreting the data which have been presented to the mind by the perceptions. But the data of the 'intuitive' person are in character different from, and usually more extensive than, those of the 'rationalistic' thinker.

A necessary word : We must not permit ourselves to be misled by the crudeness of many of the earlier manifestations of this renewed interest on the part of man in his deeper nature. All over the world we find people who are experimenting with Thought Power, who are practising Concentration and Meditation, who are endeavouring to modify their psychic constitution by diet, rhythmic breathing, the use of appropriate colours; who are striving, often in the most ludicrous ways, to gain some sort of contact with the All, the One, the Universal Mind. The greater number of such persons are, it must be admitted, painfully unscientific in outlook, and unduly credulous regarding any questions relating to the spiritualistic, the occult, the thaumaturgical. But it should be borne in mind that, no less than those modern philosophers who are attempting to arrive at a really synthetic picture of the world, or those thinkers who are developing a criticism of values, they are participating in a wide movement of the European consciousness. In their different ways they are combining to extend our interest in the world in a new and fruitful direction. They are concerned with that psychological basis on which the whole of our material civilization rests.

The people who are actively engaged in attempting to improve the condition of the world may be divided into two great classes. The first is composed of those—such as eugenists, economists, scientific psychologists—who attack the problem from the scientific angle, who place their trust primarily in the power of man to discover the truth about himself and society by patient research. They work by accumulating masses of facts in a spirit of dispassionate enquiry and then submitting them to analysis. Closely associated with this attitude is the belief that by modifying the environment of men and women in the light of the knowledge which is amassed in this manner, their behaviour can be fundamentally ameliorated. In a word,

they lay emphasis more than anything upon the power of the outside circumstances to influence the psyche. The greater part of this book will be taken up with an examination of the misconceptions which are implied in this view of social reform.

Those people, on the other hand, who are devoting their attention to the cultivation of the inner life may be said to be working from the opposite end of the scale. The ideal of rationalistic enquiry is an increase of knowledge which is obtained solely by a combination of accuracy of observation and acuteness of analysis. The accuracy and acuteness may be increased by practice, but that is all. The ideal is strictly limited, and has, in fact, been already realized in a multitude of absolutely scrupulous enquiries. That is to say, the mind to which experience is presented for examination is regarded as remaining essentially unchanged as this development of thought goes on; people will become more and more clever, and that is all. The assumption, however, at the base of the intuitive method of dealing with the problem is of a widely different order. The intuitionist takes his stand upon the principle that the important point is the development of the instrument, and not the extension of the field which it is employed to survey. In other words, he contends that by changing the focus of your consciousness you can become aware of a series of relationships which are infinitely more vital than are those which exist on that mechanical level which is alone accessible to Science. For indefinite horizontal expansion he would substitute vertical penetration. He is no less obliged than the orthodox scientist to organize the experience which he derives from this mode of contemplating life—there is no question here of a conflict between intuition and reason. But he suggests that in this way he acquires a knowledge of essences and final causes, of the deeper, organic *Zusammenhang* of the objects in the world, which emancipates him from the

obligation to multiply his facts. 'He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh,' says Thomas à Kempis, 'is set free from many opinions.'

It is necessary to understand the essential difference between these two ways of studying the laws of life. Scientific sociology acts on the assumption that all that is necessary, if we wish to understand the nature of man and society, is clarity of mind sustained by persistence of intention: it will be sufficient if we come to the point of pursuing all our enquiries in that spirit of precision which we maintain in the field of chemistry and physics. The mystical thinker contends, on the contrary, that there is required something more—the integrity of the whole individual. That is to say, he insists upon the fact that the sole knowledge about human beings which is truly illuminating is that which is secured at the cost of the purification of the self. It is only the regenerated man, he asserts, who can achieve a vision of organic society. Truth in this sphere is to be obtained, not by the tension of the mind alone, but additionally by the transmutation of the animal soul. The significant lines connecting events are only perceptible to the redeemed individual. This, of course, is what has always been taught by the great religious teachers of the world, who have one and all insisted that it is nothing less than folly to attempt to build up a new society composed of individuals who are still ignorant of their own potentialities, who have no clear realization of their true relation to the world and to one another, whose hearts are still filled with dark and confused desires. Mr Wells finds it easy enough to write that 'the religious life, its perpetual self-examination for sin and sinful motives, its straining search after personal perfection, appears in the new light as being scarcely less egotistical than a dandy's', and to suggest instead that all that is needed for the creation of a new social order is good will, a certain amount of commonsense, and an appropriate humility in the face

of the vast biological processes which have brought our race into being. Yet the fact remains that until man has dared to look into himself he has no guarantee that the configuration of his outer world is not destined to be transformed through an unforeseen change in his own consciousness. Nor is he free to achieve that passage beyond himself into a wider life on which Mr Wells rightly lays so much stress.

3

At the present time, then, we are confronted on all sides with a definite and increasing interest in the problem of 'values.' Whether that interest expresses itself negatively in the form of a criticism of existing standards of thought, or positively in the search for others of a more fundamental order is, from our present point of view, a matter of subsidiary importance; what is significant is that thinkers of the most diverse types are uniting in an attempt to find a more spiritual basis for social and individual life, a basis which shall be arrived at after having taken *all* the aspects of the question into consideration, and not merely those which are apparent to the calculating intelligence working alone without the heart. The movement, that is to say, is towards integration, towards envisaging the facts of life in their totality. And at the same time it is away from naturalism, pseudo-spirituality, sensationalism, and empiricism.

But this anti-naturalistic tendency is really almost all that these revolutionary thinkers have in common. On considering the positive element in their theories, one finds that the greater number of them have very little that is original to offer. On the constructive side, they are content to appeal to those æsthetic and moral canons which have been laid down by great minds in the past. They attempt to solve the problem in terms of principles which, illuminating as they are, have yet been elaborated as the

result of an experience which by no means fully coincides with our own. They fall back on Confucius, Aristotle, or Scholasticism.

There is, of course, nothing in the least reprehensible in this procedure. It is evident that the principles which have been evolved by minds of this order will serve to illuminate human experience until the end of time; we shall neither outgrow St Augustine nor cease to learn from the pages of Meister Eckhart. Further, the reason for this instinctive recourse to authority is obvious enough. Formlessness can only be opposed by form, and nothing could be more natural than that the critic who is endeavouring to counteract the shapeless emotionalism of the present epoch should back up his contentions by an appeal to principles which have been elaborated in the past by the great masters of the spiritual life. Nevertheless, it is highly necessary that some attempt should be made to deal with the problem in terms of the modern consciousness. For although the eternal verities remain, what is important is the direction from which we are approaching them at the present day, the way in which they are conceived in the light of the mental atmosphere of our time. A search for spiritual values in the twentieth century is a very different business from what it was in the fourteenth. The world which we have to transcend is of an altogether different type; the obstacles in the way of attaining spiritual vision are of a novel order; many of the weapons which are at our disposal for the purpose have only been designed in the course of the last few decades.

Again, it is important that the subject should be considered in a more realistic spirit. For it is to be noted that no one of these writers has so far attempted to examine the more fundamental issues which are raised by the speculations in which they are indulging. What, for example, is the nature of the process by which we arrive at our judgments of value? Is it identical with that of

artistic perception? Can we describe it as 'intuitive'? and, if so, what precise meaning are we to give to the term? What relation does this activity bear to that of the discursive mind? What is the nature of the mechanism by which naturalism distorts spiritual values? How far is the present social order an expression of naturalistic thinking? None of these questions has so far been attacked directly; and yet until they are attacked the subject will inevitably remain in a state of considerable confusion. Clearly what is needed is the creation of a Critique of Values, something of the order of that Critique of Satisfaction which was pleaded for by the late T. E. Hulme in his *Speculations*. We must do our best to lay the foundations of what is virtually a new science—new, at any rate, in the sense that it has not yet been developed by the modern intelligence.

It is with a view to providing material for the establishing of such a Critique that I have embarked on the enquiry which follows. In accordance with the plan of the whole work, it is confined to an examination of the values which find acceptance by those modern thinkers who are making a scientific study of human beings and their relationships. For anthropological science, however impersonal its aims may be in theory, is, in actuality, exercising a continuous process of selection in the sphere of values; it is engaged all the time in rejecting certain æsthetic and moral canons, accepting others, or evolving new ones for itself. It is true that the mechanism by which the process is accomplished is by no means obvious in character. But it nevertheless exists. And the result of its operation during the last half-century in such fields as those of economics, psychology, eugenics, and social science has been the creation of a very definite type of 'mental atmosphere,' an atmosphere which is inimical to the persistence of a large number of man's most profound instinctive beliefs.

What we shall be concerned with in these pages is the

relation between two different approaches to experience. On the one hand, we have the sociologists, who are suggesting to us, by the objects and method of their researches, that we should base our social life on values of a certain type. On the other, we have a mass of individuals of more or less highly developed sensibility who, in the light of their native instincts and intuitions, unite in repudiating such values, and in intimating—chiefly by implication—that we should accept others in their place. The situation can best be symbolized, perhaps, by the opposing attitudes of the scientific eugenicist and the person who has an obscure, but obstinate, sense that his approach to the problem is somehow ‘all wrong.’ Looked at from the standpoint of the sociologist, the dispute between science and what I have termed ‘developed sensibility’ will present itself in the most natural possible manner as a conflict between Reason and Sentimentalism. Regarded from that of the intuitionist, on the contrary, it will appear as a clash between the naturalistic and the spiritual conception of the nature of human problems. The remainder of this book will be taken up with an analysis of the issues which such an opposition involves.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIOLOGY

I

THE difficulties which attend any attempt to deal with the material of human experience on scientific lines are of two main types: those which arise through the restrictions imposed upon the scientist by the technical methods which he is obliged to employ; and those—of a far more serious order—which are brought about by the fact that a large part of his data is inevitably obtained by a process of introspection—an appeal to his personal judgment regarding what is desirable, beautiful, or true. Although it is now over half a century since man's scientific interest in the world was extended to the study of his own characteristics, the full significance of these two limitations is as yet scarcely realized by educated people generally—still less so by the sociologists themselves. On all sides one constantly meets with the assumption that the conclusions of economists, eugenists, and social scientists are on the same plane as those which are reached by the physicist and the astronomer. Actually, of course, this is very far from being the case. Nor is this all. There is still no adequate appreciation of the fact that however far the sociologist pushes his enquiries, he is bound to leave the radical problems of life untouched.

The weak point of the ordinary scientific thinker is his epistemology. He tends to be extraordinarily careless about the assumptions on which his theorizing is based. It is only very special considerations which lead him to examine the nature of the canvas on which he is painting, and he is inclined to regard the study of its texture as a pursuit which can lead to 'nothing but sophistry and illusion.' It has usually been left to the

philosopher to analyse those presuppositions which are made by all the sciences in common, but which it is the province of no particular one of them to examine. The scientist himself is disposed to be satisfied with the concreteness and immediacy of his data, the clear-cut and definite quality of his conclusions, and to regard with suspicion anybody who sets about scrutinizing the foundations of the structure which he has erected.

As has already been noted, the developments which have recently taken place in the field of physics have been of such a character that the limitations of the scientific attitude are now more fully apparent. It is at least evident that Science cannot provide us with an adequate picture of the *general* nature of the world. Yet the fact, nevertheless, remains that the scientist who is concerned with the application of the scientific method to the study of human beings tends, exactly like the physicist of the last century, to think that his description is more comprehensive than it really is. And this comes about for a very comprehensible reason. The modern physicist, as opposed to his Victorian predecessor, is very fully aware that he is dealing, not with matter, but with that conception of it which happens to be consonant with the structure of the human mind. He sees that what he is handling is a number of *selected* aspects of the world. Now what led him to this realization? The criticism of those metaphysicians and philosophers who, since they entertained a more complete view of the nature of reality, were continually questioning the assumptions on which his theories were based. In the sphere of sociology, however, the situation is of a different order. We are not here concerned with any theories about the universe which are likely to make the philosopher prick up his ears. What is involved instead is the steady accumulation of a mass of facts about human beings and their relationships—an apparently innocent proceeding. Yet what this accu-

mulation implies is an exactly similar distortion of the truth in the interests of mechanical thought. The only difference is that instead of trying, like the nineteenth-century scientists, to mechanomorphize the universe, the modern sociologist is busily engaged in trying to mechanomorphize man. And he works in exactly the same way. He arbitrarily selects certain aspects of the problem for examination. In the case of physics it was the metaphysicians who were called upon to protest. In the case of modern sociology it is the students of æsthetics and moral values who should be impelled to criticism.

Let us face the nature of the situation which has arisen. Man's specifically scientific interest in the world is purely modern. As this interest develops, it not only calls for the co-operation of an increasingly vast body of workers, but in addition it demands of those workers less and less exacting qualifications. It is only the minority of the students of the subject who are to-day called upon to do anything very severe in the way of thinking or of purifying their perceptions and intuitions. The growth especially of such subjects as sociology and anthropology has made it possible for thousands of people to lay claim to the title of 'scientist' simply because they are engaged in collecting information in a systematic way. Scientific work in these fields at the present day resolves itself very largely into the amassing of quantities of 'material,' and the qualification for performing this labour consists more than anything in being able to count. The result is that all sorts of individuals whose intellectual and emotional endowment is of the most commonplace order, and who in the Middle Ages would have been peacefully employed in copying manuscripts or illuminating them, are to-day collectively engaged in creating a picture of the nature of man and society. And that picture is being built up ultimately on the basis of their crude and uneducated native sensibilities.

We are thus confronted with a manifestation of scien-

tific naturalism which is incalculably more insidious than the overt materialism of the last century. The naturalistic scientist of the Victorian epoch wished to reduce all the phenomena of life to the movement of certain hard, solid particles. The attempt has proved completely unsuccessful; we now see that he was dealing not with reality but with an abstraction from it. Yet the attitude persists. It is only the mode of its manifestation which has changed. Scientific naturalism to-day is expressing itself, not in an attempt to mechanize the universe, but in the form of the accumulation of an enormous mass of social and psychological facts of a peculiar order—the facts which present themselves as most significant to the materialistically minded type of investigator. In a word, the man who takes physical phenomena at their face value, repudiates the need for any controlling spiritual principles in life, and in effect makes the desires, thoughts, and passions of the unregenerated man the measure of all things, is now expressing his attitude to the world in terms of scientific research. As a consequence, the products of a way of looking at life which, if it manifested itself nakedly, would repel sensitive people by its crudeness, can now be successfully passed off as the results of disinterested scientific enquiry. Naturalism in its modern dress is not merely capable of escaping detection effectively; it is actually, by presenting itself as a ‘realistic’ attitude to experience, dominating the minds of thousands of people who lack that combination of intuition and analytical power which is required for piercing its disguise. Hence what is in reality the domination of refined susceptibility by crude sensibility appears as a manifestation of that control which reason must always maintain over capricious impressionism.

A great part of the trouble is due to the fact that the scientist is bound to limit his attention to the more measurable features of experience. In an essay on ‘The

Limitations of Physical Science,'* Prof. Eddington has made the profound suggestion that 'the division of the external world into a material world and a spiritual world is superficial, and that the deep line of cleavage is between the metrical and the non-metrical aspects of the world.' This conception has the most vital application to the problem of modern sociology. It is true that the enlightened sociologist of to-day would never openly suggest that the facts which he collects as the result of his scientific interest are more important than those which present themselves to other types of attention. But he very easily comes to entertain the illusory notion *that the measurable is identical with the significant*. And this pardonably enough. For what is measurable and measured can be collected in statistical tables, analysed in scientific monographs, presented to the eye in the form of tangible evidence. What is just as, or more, important but unfortunately non-measurable, on the contrary, is describable with the greatest difficulty, and then only to people who possess a certain sensitiveness of outlook.

As a consequence it is almost inevitable that those aspects of life with which Science deals should come to be regarded, not only by scientific thinkers, but by educated people generally, as being somehow more *real* than any others. The result of this view is the fostering of the idea that Science will one day come to 'control life.' Take, for instance, a statement made many years ago by Prof. Karl Pearson to the effect that 'as human knowledge increases, human society will tend to greater stability, because History and Science will show more and more clearly what tends to human welfare.' What he assumes is that the knowledge derived from History and Science is synonymous with that which mankind needs in order to create an organic type of society. Of course, if the terms 'History' and 'Science' are given a suffi-

* See *Science, Religion, and Reality*, 1925.

ciently wide connotation no objection need be taken to the statement. But in the sense in which they are interpreted by scientists to-day it cannot be allowed to pass without criticism. For it implies two perfectly unwarranted assumptions: that such knowledge of men and their relationships as is susceptible of scientific treatment is of sufficient importance to provide us with a basis for positive social action; and that the people who are qualified to perform the relatively simple task of collecting the facts are also in a position to interpret them.

2

Perhaps the most effective way of gaining a clear vision of twentieth-century scientific naturalism is to consider for a moment the forces which have combined to bring it into being.

If we retrace our steps to the first half of the seventeenth century we encounter two figures who respectively stand for two different and very important ways of thinking about life: Pascal and Descartes. Both are closely associated with the early stages of the development of modern science, but in very diverse fashions. For a definition of the nature of that diversity we are indebted to Pascal, who, in a famous passage, has pointed out that there are in existence two outstanding types of thinkers: those in whom there is developed what he calls the *esprit géométrique*; and those who possess what he calls the *esprit de finesse*. The nature of these two orders of interest in life and of the opposition between them is obvious enough. Both proceed with equal logic; once again, it is not here a question of a difference between intuition and reason. Where they differ is in the fact that the thinker whose mind is of the first type instinctively chooses to exercise it on problems which are susceptible of systematic treatment, while the other finds himself most interested in those subtle, evanescent, and more

interior aspects of experience which cannot be handled with the same rigour and confidence.

Now it would not be going too far to describe the post-Renaissance development of the European minds as the attaining by the *esprit géométrique* of a violent ascendancy over the *esprit de finesse*. It was the *esprit géométrique* which, so legitimately and brilliantly exercised in the field of physics, produced such magnificent results in the early stages of the growth of our genuinely scientific interest in the surrounding world. But it was equally the *esprit géométrique* which was responsible for that denial of the significance of emotional experience which was expressed in the phenomenon of Nineteenth-Century Materialism. And it is the same *esprit géométrique* which is providing us to-day, by a concentration on the merely measurable aspects of experience, with a distorted view of the nature of man and society. It is characteristic of the age that few modern thinkers are aware of the significance of that alternative approach to the problems of life which was put forward by Pascal exactly at the moment when the possibilities of geometrical thought were beginning to appeal to men's minds.

Pascal began by having a distinguished career as a pure scientist. At an early age, however, his interest in life underwent a change, and those of his utterances which we value most to-day are concerned with man's spiritual relation to the world. Pascal attained the clearest understanding possible of the nature of Reason, and it was the completeness of this understanding which, combined with his native delicacy of perception, made him so keenly aware of its limitations. Nothing could be more characteristic of his attitude than his insistence that 'the last act of Reason is to recognize that there is an infinity of things which surpass it,' or his reminder that 'we should not judge the truth of things by our capacity to conceive them.' Even more significant is his famous

observation that 'the heart has reasons of which the Reason knows nothing.' For it is the 'heart' which furnishes the mind with those data to which such particular attention is paid by the *esprit de finesse*. Pascal was keenly aware of the fact that in dealing with our experience everything depends upon our initial choice of units of classification, and that, further, this choice is exercised anterior to our treatment of it from a scientific angle. The difference between a 'spiritual' attitude to life and that adopted by the naturalistic type of thinker lies exactly in the fact that the spiritually minded person approaches the analysis of experience equipped with a particularly subtle set of categories, categories which are meaningless to a mind which is not working on the same level of consciousness.

Now I would suggest that although in the course of the last half century Science, working in the field of sociology and anthropology, has increased its material to an enormous extent, the question of the *quality* of the data which have been amassed has been correspondingly neglected. There are far too many facts and there is far too little appreciation, either of the arbitrary way in which they have been brought into existence, or of the difficulties which attend their interpretation. Our minds have become dazzled by the merely quantitative results of extending the method of physics to the study of man, and we have failed to appreciate the nature of the limitations which we have imposed upon ourselves in the process. Not, of course, that the creation of the subject of modern sociology does not constitute a remarkable achievement of the human mind. But it should be clearly realized that it is chiefly valuable in so far as it provides us with a methodical approach to human problems, a mechanism by which all new data relating to man and his environment can be handled in an effective manner, a means of controlling the raw stuff of experience. On

the other hand, the existence of such a system does not by any means imply that the material with which it deals will be of a significant order.

3

Not only can the unconscious naturalistic bias of the average modern sociologist be demonstrated by any patient individual who is willing to examine his work from this point of view, but it is also indicated very eloquently by the nature of his avowed emotional sympathies.

The philosophy of naturalism has found its more or less formal exponents since the time of Democritus. Its tendency, as every student of the subject is aware, has always been to reduce all emotional, mental, and spiritual phenomena as far as possible to the level of reflexes of material happenings, to dispense with the notion of a spiritual basis for the world, and to repudiate the autonomy of the mind. But it has an important emotional component as well. The naturalistic man has always emphasized as strongly as possible the twin notions of the natural goodness of man and his corruption through unhappy external influences. This idea has further inevitably tended to engender its corollary, that it is only necessary to modify man's circumstances to render his life one of freedom and happiness. This doctrine has been embraced throughout history by multitudes of individuals, but it was left to Rousseau to advocate it with a persuasiveness and passion which set the world on fire. He presented to men a picture of a new society based on a combination of the innate innocence of human beings and the all-sufficingness of Reason, a picture which has proved so alluring that it has not yet ceased to dazzle their eyes. 'Man was born free and everywhere he is in chains.' So runs perhaps the most dangerous single statement which has come from the pen of any writer, ancient or modern.

One could almost divide European history since the Renaissance into the period before that remark was first uttered and that in which its consequences are still unfolding themselves.

If, bearing in mind the impetus which was given to naturalistic thinking by the teaching of Rousseau and his disciples, we examine the ideals and aspirations of the scientific students of man, we find them to be directly in that tradition. Nor need we be surprised at the circumstance. The intellectual and the emotional ingredients in this point of view are perfectly complementary; one almost calls for the other. It may be objected that it is the business of these scientists to be detached; that their personal ideals are a private matter. The reply is that as a matter of actual fact they are nothing of the sort. Scientific sociology, Rousseauistic optimism, an insidious neglect of various spiritual values, a marked tendency towards scepticism and agnosticism—these strands are so closely interwoven in the outlook of such thinkers that it is a matter of pure impossibility to separate them. And it is characteristic of the state of modern sociology that the scientists are profoundly unconscious of the fact themselves; only very rarely does one encounter an attempt on their part to determine where in their work strict science ceases and philosophizing, preaching and believing begin. There is no more urgent task awaiting sociology than that of examining the emotional foundations on which its conclusions are based. Up to the present the question has hardly been attacked at all. It is true that a few sociologists are beginning to have misgivings: the emotional bias exhibited by some of the workers in this particular field is too obvious to escape attention. But the full significance of the existing state of affairs has as yet escaped even the most critical minds.

Consider the most comprehensive attack on the problem which has so far been undertaken: Prof. J. A.

Hobson's *Free-Thought in the Social Sciences* (1926). This study is of the first importance for our subject, an enquiry which should make every serious social scientist pause and review his methods of work. The nature and impact of the forces conspiring to prejudice the disinterestedness of the student of human problems are analysed in this able essay with the greatest possible care. Yet the fact remains that Prof. Hobson has not really penetrated to the root of the matter at issue. For his analysis is restricted, for the most part, to the manner in which theorizing and the interpretation of data are affected by emotional bias. The validity of the data *as such* he is disposed, for the most part, to take for granted. He does not sufficiently appreciate the manner in which instinctive prejudice can express itself, not only in the theoretical treatment of the 'facts' when once they have been accumulated, but *in their very creation*. It is this second type of interference which is the most dangerous of all. For what is involved is not simply that some definite and assignable bias of tradition or education has perverted the growth of theory. On the contrary, what we have to do with is the psychic constitution of the investigator—the very stuff out of which his soul is built; his ingrained naturalistic or materialistic sympathies will bring about an infinitely more subtle distortion of the truth than any which is due to these other, and more superficial, types of prejudice.

In a word, the most significant factor of all is the level on which the consciousness of the investigator is pitched. If the quality of that consciousness is commonplace, his conclusions will inevitably suffer as a result. A man's mind may be free from all those prejudices which Prof. Hobson has so painstakingly enumerated; his reasoning may be scrupulously fair. But if he is by constitution that natural man who understandeth not the things of the spirit, the whole of his thinking will be perverted by his

instinctive repudiation of those superior values which must be taken into consideration in every problem with which the mind of man is called upon to deal.

How are we to resist effectively this interference of emotion and instinct with disinterested thought? Prof. Hobson looks for guidance to the findings of 'psychology,' the dubious conclusions of which science he appears to accept with quite astonishing docility. Yet it should surely be obvious to such a careful thinker that if prejudice and passion can pervert our thinking in the sphere of economics and eugenics, they will exert a still more pernicious influence in the field of 'psychology' itself. What he suggests, in fact, is that we should correct the conclusions of social science by the use of an instrument of even more questionable integrity.

What course, then, is left for us? How are we to proceed if we wish to ensure that the court of ultimate appeal shall not also be an object of suspicion? It seems difficult to escape the inference that we are driven back to that purification of the self on which the religious teacher lays so much stress, and which at the same time lies at the foundation of all really constructive sociological thought. For by what other means can we possibly secure the integrity of the master science of all—psychology? Prof. Hobson, however, appears to be reluctant to face this conclusion. After having resolutely pressed his enquiries to the point of recognizing that in the end everything turns on the psychological attitude of the individual theorist, he shirks instinctively the final admission that the disinterestedness of the findings of that abstract science to which he looks for support is only to be guaranteed by something which lies beyond the plane of science altogether—namely, personal regeneration. Nevertheless, his essay remains of the greatest value, for it must serve to demonstrate to even the most obstinately 'scientific' mind that truth in this region is not to be obtained by careful reasoning alone.

SCIENCE AND HOMO SAPIENS

I

IN the last chapter I put forward the suggestion that in extending their studies to the behaviour of human beings, the scientists have crossed a very significant line, the importance of which has been inadequately recognized. This point must now be developed.

The difficulties of Science begin at the level of the living organism. It is one thing to examine and report upon the nature of a piece of iron, and quite another to subject a sentient being to the same process. In the field of chemistry and physics the observer has things all his own way. Yet even in dealing with colloids he finds that his path is not altogether smooth; there are already adumbrations of those awkward manifestations, purpose and will. Once in the region of biology, the difficulties of preserving the mechanical conceptions of Science become fully apparent: the quarrel that is still raging between the mechanists and the vitalists sufficiently indicates the nature of the problems which arise directly the living has to be described in terms of the dead.

When Science comes to consider Man the situation becomes even more complicated. All goes well while it is simply a question of determining his purely physical characteristics. His 'place in Nature' can, on this level, be arrived at without much difficulty. He is clearly one of the Primates, but remarkable among them by being isolated as *Homo Sapiens*. He has a particular distribution in space and time, duly recorded by the ethnologists and ethnographers. Such features as his pigmentation, his cranial index, the acuity of his different senses, his capacity for muscular effort, can be measured with even greater ease than can the corresponding qualities of other animals

since, as *Homo Sapiens*, he is able to co-operate intelligently with the investigator—even in cases in which the investigator himself is not entitled to lay much claim to the title. But now a serious difficulty arises. It is evident that the vital element in the human creature is just that part of him which is most closely connected with his unique possession—mind. Primitive man was at the mercy of, and powerfully modified by, such factors as climate, food, the obligation to lead a pastoral existence or the life of the hunter. To-day, in the twentieth century, our significant environment is, if I may so express it, largely within ourselves. The whole of our specifically human development is away from ‘Nature’ and towards the creation of new conditions from within. In so far as we become civilized, our physical conditions are those of our own making. We ignore climate and choose our food-stuffs from the ends of the earth. On the other hand, the influence of mind is beginning to affect us more and more. We get through a difficult day sustained, not only by a good meal, but by a fruitful conversation, an inspiring piece of music, a few pages of suggestive writing, while these very stimuli emanate from intelligences whose activity is only to a small degree a function of the physical conditions in which they are working. A modern Russian peasant may, indeed, be greatly susceptible to the immediate influences of his physical environment; but he is capable of being much more violently affected by the ideas of a Jewish theorist who died thousands of miles away several decades before he was born. Spiritual energy, imagination, emotional disposition, ethical bias, ‘character’: these are the qualities in man which we need to understand if ever Science is to ‘control life.’

The fact that it is man’s psychology which is the most important thing about him was realized by the scientific students of mankind as far back as half a century ago.

The first psychological laboratory was instituted by Wundt in 1879, and Galton's *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, one of the chief points of departure of the eugenics movement, was first published in 1883. Since that time the science of experimental psychology has developed at a rapid pace, and it may be safely asserted that all really vital scientific interest in man now centres on examining, as far as is methodically possible, his psychic and mental characteristics. Even the most conservative anthropologists have now come round to seeing, with the heroine of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, that 'brains are really everything.'

It is at this point—the study of specifically human attributes—that the trouble begins. There comes into play the very important factor of *measurability*. Looked at from the scientific point of view, the outstanding difference between, say, a lump of copper and a man, is that the qualities of the copper which are measurable happen also to be those which interest us from the point of view of understanding its fundamental nature and building up an accurate picture of the physical universe. We should surely gain little if, for example, we could determine its taste and smell with the same accuracy with which we now ascertain its weight, structure, melting-point, and the like. At least, one can only suppose so. With man, on the contrary, the position is exactly reversed. It is just the 'imponderables' that are of the most significance. In so far as he is a creature which passes on the pigmentation of its eyes to its offspring in accordance with Mendelian laws, which possesses physical organs with definite, measurable capacities, which, in a word, reflects in its own rhythms the wider rhythms of Nature, man can be dealt with effectively by Science. For Science is committed by her principles to considering man as a part of Nature. Only on this basis can his behaviour be effectively related to that of other living organisms. His conduct, if

explained at all, must, from this point of view, be elucidated in terms of the general laws which regulate the rest of life. The scientist can only deal with him by atomizing his personality, by regarding it as a particular combination of elements which, differently grouped, go to form other types of creatures. Science is, in fact, exactly what she once described herself as being—natural philosophy. But in so far as man evolves processes like the differential calculus, worships his Maker, practises *yoga*, writes and listens to music, he passes outside the sphere of measurability.

If we consider the laboratory tests of the professional experimental psychologist, we find that they work very well so long as the investigator confines his attention to measuring something unimportant. On the level of reaction times, reflexes, and sense discrimination he is able to deal with his material competently enough. When, however, he attempts to pass to the psychic region, he finds himself limited to the analysis of faculties and abilities of the simplest possible type. Nobody who is at all familiar with the history of the efforts of scientific investigators to measure even such an apparently innocent quality as 'intelligence' can fail to observe that in this respect, at least, psychology is very much in the same position as was physics at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Even when it is a question of discovering the talents needed for doing the work of a postal sorter, the conclusions which are painfully elaborated in the laboratory are not of very much greater value than those of 'common-sense.' As for higher qualities, no competent authority on the subject would ever suggest that such characteristics as 'altruism,' 'determination,' and 'generosity,' all of which are of the greatest importance from the social point of view, can conceivably be dealt with on scientific lines. Are such parlour games as *The Ethical Discrimination Test* of Kohs or *The June-Downey*

Will-Temperament Test going to be taken seriously by any intelligent person?

Why do we find ourselves smiling at the naïvety of the scientist who imagines that the measuring of a person's temperament is on the same level as finding out how many *n*'s a child can cross out on a page in a given period? Clearly because we are conscious that such an undertaking involves so disproportionate an amount of purely personal judgment that it would be preposterous to apply the adjective 'scientific' to any of the results obtained. The point at issue is here perfectly simple. But suppose that we push our enquiries a little farther. Suppose that we ask a number of questions like the following: What is the nature of the part which is played by introspection in other types of scientific research into psychological and social problems? To what extent does even the most apparently straightforward investigation rest upon a questionable subjective foundation? Is it just possible that in developing what are known as 'the social sciences' scientists have crossed, or rather blundered across, a frontier which is of far greater significance than they imagine? These are matters which seem to me to demand very serious attention on the part of everybody who is interested in the propagation of accurate ideas and honest thinking. And when we bear in mind the disconcerting nature of the answers which were given by philosophy to these same enquiries when it was a question of the subjective basis of physical science, we may be induced, perhaps, to consider them with more than ordinary care.

I have already referred to the characteristic disregard of the average scientist for epistemological considerations. It was this disregard which led to the development of the philosophy of scientific materialism in the course of the last century, and it is the same disregard which is responsible for the misleading evaluation of the conclusions

of sociology with which we are being confronted to-day. We find that, even in this region, where the appeal to introspection is far more patent than it is in the case of physical science, our psychologists, sociologists, and economists pass over the fact with the greatest non-chalance in the world. The following passage from Prof. Spearman's *Abilities of Man* (1927) embodies, to my mind, a very significant admission:

On proceeding to enquire, then, how far this power (of introspection) has been brought within the range of mental tests, the answer would seem to be blankly negative. Nothing of the sort appears to have ever yet been measured, save only a person's knowledge of his own sensations; and even the knowing of these has been inextricably mingled with the knowing of likeness and difference between them. . . . Still less, of course, have any measurements been obtained as to how far this introspective power is correlated with any other abilities. Here at once, then, we detect an immense gap in the range of the mental tests. . . .

2

That some amount of introspection is necessarily involved in every psychological investigation, however sternly 'objective' the spirit in which it is conducted, is apparent enough. A purely detached description of a psychological situation would be an absurdity. It would be to deal with the behaviour of other people as if they were pure automata, to say: 'The man over there is clenching his fists and stamping his feet. Now he has seized the photograph of that beautiful girl and torn it to pieces. . . . Now, etc. Of course, if *I* did such things it would mean that I was very, very angry. But I'm not going to be beguiled into resorting to anything so dangerous as Introspection; I shall set down only the Bare Facts.' The question is, then, purely one of degree.

When a man says that a certain roof is 'red,' he must necessarily have compared its colour with a pattern which he carries inside his own head. We check his assertion by looking inside *our* heads to see whether what he calls 'red' is the colour to which we give the name. It is not. We find that *we* should describe the roof as 'green.' Investigation follows, and it transpires that the man is 'colour-blind'—that is to say, he is in a minority of one in I don't know how many thousand. On the other hand, if he can discern real shades which are missed by everyone else, he falls equally outside our pale; until the eyes of the race are better developed we shall be unable to discover whether he is speaking the truth or not. Meanwhile, we must assume the existence of a ground on which we can all meet. We take our stand on 'what is common to all observers.' Now, the degree of introspection required to enable us to move about this common world efficiently is very slight; so much so, in fact, that we fail to notice that there is any act of introversion involved. 'Go on past the Police Station, take the first turning after it on the left, and you will see opposite you a big house with a green door.' All the terms in this description are immediately comprehensible to us; unless we are very stupid, or grievously misinformed, we reach the place all right. If we consider them more carefully, however, we realize that although the words 'first' and 'on the left' must have the same significance for everybody, 'opposite,' 'big,' and 'green' could be very variously interpreted. Nevertheless, they are adequate to our immediate purpose. For we are working on the level of 'common sense,' the basis of which is that the points regarding which the reports of different observers are found to be conflicting are of less importance than are those about which they agree. 'Of middle height, eyes blue, fit only for Home Service' are expressions which are near enough for all sorts of statistical and administrative pur-

poses. But 'temperament melancholy'—and we find ourselves in a world of opinions and impressions. What is more important, however, is the fact that it is only at this point that we first become aware of the fact that we are indulging in introspection. 'Melancholy,' 'sombre,' 'grave,' 'depressed'; we savour these terms with our psychic palate, conscious of what we are doing, yet at the same time failing to realize that we were unreflectingly doing just the same thing before. The remark that a chair is 'black' and the remark that the person who is sitting in it is 'inspired' have exactly the same psychological foundation. It is simply that one statement has a meaning which, for practical purposes, is 'the same for all observers,' while the other can only be made to convey an identical meaning to a number of people by inducing them to engage in a considerable amount of self-analysis.

Now, it is in the nature of Science to attempt always to get along with the absolute minimum of introspection, and therefore scientific observers seek to describe everything as far as possible in terms which can be understood with the least possible amount of preliminary internal reference. They accordingly employ by preference units which can be readily manipulated by everybody concerned. Whatever differences may be exhibited by people in temperament and disposition, they all understand exactly the same thing by length, weight, duration, and coincidence of position. The aim of the scientific investigator is, in fact, that of reducing all observations to simple constataions of similarity or disparity; in physics, for instance, where the method can be employed *par excellence*, everything finally turns on observing whether a certain pointer is at a certain place on a scale, so that at the crucial moment only one of the five senses is involved, and that is employed only for the purpose of distinguishing form. Sociology and psychology are not, of course, able to achieve a like precision. But they, nevertheless,

make an attempt at describing their subject-matter in scientific terms—*i.e.*, in terms of appeal to the senses, or to those intuitions, like that of 'right' and 'left,' for example, which we all possess.

But at this point serious difficulties arise. Sociology would be a straightforward pursuit if all the psychological facts which we need to know in order to understand human beings could be stated in terms applicable to inanimate objects. But this is far from being the case. The world, as Prof. James Ward once dryly remarked, was not designed to make Science easy. However ingeniously we go to work, we find it impossible to convey the effect of inner experience except in language which is appropriate, not to 'hard, massy particles,' but to the human soul. However 'scientific' the description of a psychological situation may be, that part of it which refers to the more 'inner' aspects of the experience must necessarily be couched in the language of the heart. An appeal, implicit or explicit, is made to our introspection, to what I have already described as the psychic palate. If that palate is defective, then the conclusions which the owner of it draws from his data are as valueless as those of a colour-blind man on the spectrum. As Coleridge puts it:

It is in the nature of all disquisitions on matters of taste that the reasoner must appeal for his very premises to facts of feeling and of inner sense, which all men do not possess, and which many, who do possess and even act upon them, yet have never reflectively adverted to, have never made them objects of a full and distinct consciousness. The geometrician refers to certain figures in space, and to the power of describing certain lines, which are intuitive to all men, as men; and, therefore, his demonstrations are throughout compulsory. The moralist and the philosophic critic lay claim to no positive, but only to a conditional necessity. It is not necessary that A or B should judge at all concerning poetry; but if he does, in order to have

a just taste, such and such faculties must have been developed in his mind.

(On the Principles of Sound Criticism.)

The same point of view is put forward in the following passage by Pascal :

One often writes things which one can only prove by obliging everybody to reflect on his own experience and discover the truth of what one is saying. The proofs of what I am saying consist in this.

These considerations can be very pertinently applied to sociological research. Science approaches the study of the inner world of thought and feeling, armed with methods and principles which have been elaborated for the express purpose of conquering the world of material bodies. But there is a fundamental difference between the physical and the non-physical region of investigation. On the plane of chemistry and physics, your data are given you by Nature; your state of mind merely affects your capacity to observe and interpret it. Copper sulphate is copper sulphate to you, whether by temperament you are a Cynic or a Platonist. A mood of impatience may cause you to go wrong in determining its atomic structure, but that is all. On the level of the subjective feelings, however, your data change all the time with your interior condition. To appreciate Beethoven you must be tuned up to a certain pitch; certain spiritual experiences may be denied you permanently owing to the nature of your psychic make-up. In fine, to obtain the data which he requires, the sociologist is thrown back upon a sort of psychological tea-tasting. He must distinguish effectively between certain flavours, and only then proceed to the stage of research.

Let us realize as clearly as possible that Science, on the other hand, can only deal with absolute values. If

'solubility' does not mean the same thing in all possible equations, systematization is clearly out of the question. The conceptions in terms of which physics, for example, describes the universe, may not—as happens, I understand, to be the case at the moment—be consistent with one another, but each has to be used consistently if it be used at all. And the observer of the emotional and mental characteristics of men and women is obliged to make his values absolute as well. This is practically equivalent to his postulating the existence of a perfectly just, calm, and perspicacious being—something like the Ideal Observer of William James—and disengaging from the mass of prejudiced opinion which exists on the subject of human values those which this hypothetical paragon would alone entertain. The student of physical science follows, of course, a similar procedure. But the phantom psychologist is a very much more complicated and richly endowed being than the phantom physicist.

But even supposing that the sociologists were to become conscious of the extent to which their researches involve qualitative judgments, it is clear that they would have to concede the fact that *as sociologists* they have very small qualifications for indulging in them. Their work is that of establishing relations between phenomena. I shall have occasion later to discuss Prof. Karl Pearson's attempt to deal scientifically with certain qualities like 'shyness.' It should be clear that in the last analysis such terms represent generalizations based on the observation of subjective impressions; in correlating 'shyness' with age, we are simply establishing a connection between one type of generalized conception and another. But the initial experience through the contemplation of which we were led to evolve the idea of shyness is of a peculiar order; it has, like all other special experience, to be handled by experts. 'Values' is a subject in itself. To be entitled to put forward moral and æsthetic judgments a man must

perfect himself in a certain kind of discrimination which is hardly called for at all in scientific research. Looked at more closely, this discrimination is seen to be exercised between those objects—subjective impressions of truth and beauty—which Science endeavours, as far as possible, to leave out of account. The sociologist has absolutely no justification for attempting to unite in one person the functions of the specialist in measurement and the specialist in emotional discrimination.

Further, even supposing that it could be somehow agreed upon that certain qualities were of particular importance, how, to begin with, are they to be described, and how, when described, are they to be identified? Directly we indulge in any introspection that is at all profound, we find that what appear to be simply the names of qualities are, in reality, mere generic terms used to designate innumerable sub-varieties of experience. And most of these varieties have no names. They can only be evoked by having recourse to the symbols of art: for what other purpose does art exist? But if it is only the person with a sensitive mind who can isolate them, it follows that it will require a person with an equally sensitive mind to recognize them when that isolation has been accomplished.

It is true, of course, that it might on these lines be possible to elaborate a classification so subtle that only a handful of ultra-refined people could make use of it (although this, be it said, would not necessarily constitute an argument against the value of such a classification). But it is equally true that if your classification is extremely coarse you are only working with such a rough approximation to the truth that your conclusions are of little significance. And this applies very fully to the work of the sociologists. We find them talking about psychological qualities as if they were no more analysable into varieties or their component elements than are qualities like

'malleability' or 'adhesiveness' on the physical plane. They are dealing, not with things, but with names. And this, I think, is a sufficient answer to those thinkers who are so fond of speaking of the time when Science shall 'control life.' For, given that you have pushed your knowledge of neural conditions to its furthest possible limit, the fact remains that the nature of that 'behaviour' which you propose to associate indissolubly with different physical, measurable reactions is, in the end, a matter of personal judgment. Prof. Watson, the advocate of Behaviourism, talks about Science being one day able to foresee what a man will 'do' in a given situation. But what do we mean when we say that a man is 'doing' this or that? We may all agree that at the moment he is watering his garden. But who is to determine such points as whether he behaves to others with real charity, whether he possesses good taste, whether he is really working for one end rather than another? How, for example, are you going to discover by laboratory research that a man has the equipment for a 'good' dancer? For the question of what is a 'good' dancer is a matter of opinion, to be decided by the critic of values. It is all very well to assert that every neurosis must have its corresponding psychosis, but the fact remains that however precise you make your constations at one end of the scale, those at the other end remain the objects of personal judgment. And judgment is an art.

3

What it all comes to is that you can only deal with the results of introspection in others to the extent that you are capable of being introspective yourself. We find, of course, that the professional psychologists do not fail to realize the importance of this fact. Messrs Collins and Drever write, for instance, as follows in their *Experimental Psychology* (1926): 'If we observe an individual with drooping mien,

his step weary and tired, and his whole demeanour suggestive of mental apathy and general lassitude we infer' (*i.e.*, conclude through implied introspection) 'that he is feeling listless and depressed.' They add, with that profundity which we have grown to expect from such students of humanity: 'By carefully noting an individual's general tendencies, one can often foretell his behaviour when placed in a certain environment.' This is true—of the sort of behaviour in which such psychologists are interested. But what if the quality observed happens to be such that it is only apparent to a more penetrating vision? Let me quote here from Prof. Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. He is considering the idea of the 'numinous':

This mental state is perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to any other; and, therefore, like every other primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined. There is only one way to help another to an understanding of it. He must be guided and led on by consideration and discussion of the matter through the ways of his own mind, until he reach the point at which 'the numinous' in him perforce begins to stir, to start into life and into consciousness. We can co-operate in this process by bringing before his notice all that can be found in other regions of the mind, already known and familiar, to resemble, or again to afford some special contrast to, the particular experience we wish to elucidate. Then we must add: 'This X of ours is not precisely *this* experience, but akin to this one and the opposite of that other. Cannot you now realize for yourself what it is?' In other words, our X cannot, strictly speaking, be taught, it can only be evoked, awakened in the mind; as everything that 'comes of the spirit' must be awakened.

Here we have a situation in which the qualifications for verifying the judgment are of a very special order. You either feel what the numinous is, or you do not. If it means nothing to you, then no exchange of opinion between us is possible.

Finally, I would suggest that even if various qualities were duly isolated and their manifestations in individuals identified, what was thus found out would bear no very close relationship to the facts of actual life. When you have, at length, discovered that a physical substance has such-and-such a composition you may be said to have dealt with it; for, other things being equal, it will remain what it is. Even animals exhibit both racially and as individuals a marked consistency in their habits. But with man the situation is ever changing. The elements in his composition which you have disengaged by analysis are perpetually recombining; the man whom you successfully examined in your laboratory yesterday may be a different person to-day. As Dostoevsky has remarked: 'A man may be a wise man on Monday and a fool on Tuesday.' And it is to be noted that this variability becomes marked just in proportion to the development in people of a heightened consciousness of deeper realities: the future behaviour of the ploughman is, to a small extent, predictable; that of the sensitive artist practically not at all. 'The spirit bloweth where it listeth.'

The foregoing will serve, I hope, to bring out the fact that in prosecuting their researches the sociologists are compelled to make extensive appeals to personal impressions, and this even when they imagine that they are being most detached. What we must now consider is the way in which they regard such impressions when they recognize them to be such. In other words, we must examine their *conscious* attitude to introspection.

4

It is not surprising to discover that they view it with the greatest suspicion. Anything of the nature of a 'subjective impression' is anathema to the conscientious scientific student of mankind, for his whole object is to get

down to 'objective facts.' And this process involves, needless to say, the cultivation of the strictest possible detachment.

Now detachment is, of course, a very precious acquisition of the human mind, and it is only natural that sociologists, like other scientists, should attach the greatest importance to it. It has been found that even in considering the behaviour of the most inert and passive objects, the observer is liable to make quite extraordinary mistakes. Analogues are mistaken for homologues, efficient are confused with final causes, æsthetic, theological, and all manner of purely human prejudices distort that dispassionate vision of the object on which alone a true science can be built. To be anthropocentric is, in fine, to be lost. Only by mercilessly repressing the capricious personal element in himself can the scientist learn to see things as they are. As a consequence, such conceptions as those of 'rigour,' 'precision,' and 'objectivity' have very naturally always been heavily stressed by those who are concerned with the preservation of a purely scientific spirit in research. What could be more comprehensible, therefore, than that the sociologist should take serious pains to cultivate an impersonal attitude in dealing with his data? It would appear, in fact, that he of all those engaged in scientific enquiry is most seriously in need of such a discipline. For in what region is one more likely to be misled than in that of human relationships, in which passion and prejudice can do even more mischief than they can in the field of physical science? What more natural than that the sociologist should exhibit the strongest distrust of such qualities as intuition, inspiration, and imagination? Once, he reflects, you find yourself on that level you never know where you are. God preserve us from these deceptive personal impressions and give us hard, objective facts!

As a result, the conscientious sociologist does his very best to consider his data with an absolutely detached eye.

The spirit in which he approaches the problem is that, in fact, which is revealed by Francis Galton in the following passage from his *Inquiries into Human Faculty*:

The subject of character deserves more statistical investigation than it has yet received, and none have a better chance of doing it well than schoolmasters; their opportunities are, indeed, most enviable. It would be necessary to approach the subject wholly without prejudice, as a pure matter of observation, just as if the children were the fauna and flora of hitherto undescribed species in an entirely new land.

The attitude is, as I say, natural enough. But it is maintained at a price. For although such detachment is of the utmost value if you are concerned with fossils or spiral nebulae, when it is exercised in the field of sociology it happens to produce the unfortunate result that it prohibits you from dealing with exactly that type of data which, from the point of view of understanding and controlling life, it is most important that you should handle. It is not that detachment in this field is undesirable, but that if you exercise it rigorously, only certain limited aspects of the question can present themselves to your attention. It ensures the reliability of such conclusions as you actually reach, but implies at the same time that they are of a comparatively sterile nature. This circumstance should be obvious enough. Yet the sociologists persistently fail to recognize its significance. They talk instead as if it is only to the detached and scientific eye that the truth about human beings can ever be apparent.

Consider what is involved. The observer who treats human experience in this completely impersonal manner is safeguarding himself, it is true, from a number of possible errors in purely external observation; he notes down the reaction times of a friend as impartially as he does those of an enemy. But at the same time he is doing nothing less than cutting himself off completely from the

possibility of obtaining any data which are of any great importance for a real understanding of life. He merely retires out of the range of operation of vital and creative forces to enjoy the dismal security of a neutral. Duly established in his little psychological Switzerland, he then proceeds to study the effects produced in others by living experience. And this although he is working in a sphere in which passion is the only means to knowledge.

What the sociologists have failed to realize is the simple fact that, although what might be described as true objective vision—the equivalent on the plane of the soul of seeing a chair as a chair on the physical level—is only to be achieved by adopting an absolutely impersonal attitude, what the individual is impersonal *about* must be a fund of rich inner experience. In a word, there is not the slightest virtue in detachment unless you have something vital as the object of it. It is only passion which can draw the person into the sphere of living experience, which can cause him to be confronted with the important facts of the case. Having gained some knowledge of them, he may then retire and examine them with detachment. This is the only way in which significant knowledge about human beings has ever been gained by man since the beginning of the world. You must first plunge into the stream of life (personally—not vicariously), and only then proceed to analyse the experience which such an act has brought you. The scientist, however, is obliged through the technique which he has adopted to leave just this type of experience out of account. This is in no sense a reflection upon him as a scientist. But what I am protesting against here is the suggestion that he can in this manner gain an insight into the workings of the soul which is as valuable as that obtained by others at the cost of sacrifice and suffering.

We have not yet, however, come to the end of this complicated question. For on looking further into the

matter we discover that it is not simply that the sociologists are studying the limited type of facts which present themselves to detached attention and then falling into the error of overestimating the significance which they possess. We find, on the contrary, that they make a cult of detachment, assuming an impersonal and impartial attitude when it is only too clearly out of place—out of place, that is to say, for the reason that the data under consideration could not possibly be the object of legitimate scientific attention. The work of most of the writers who deal with these questions is invested with an atmosphere of misplaced impartiality which produces an effect both ludicrous and irritating. Consider, for example, the spectacle of Prof. Graham Wallas attempting to avoid responsibility for having natural feelings by laboriously stating what one would think is the most obvious possible feature of motherhood in a sort of mock-scientific jargon :

Introspective evidence shows further that this behaviour (protection of the young by the mother) is accompanied by the warm emotion of Love, and by waves of an intense and fully conscious, though sometimes an ill-informed, desire for the health, the happiness, the 'good' in every sense of the child.

(*The Great Society*, p. 146.)

Now, it does not need very much perspicacity to see that behind the constant attempts of such writers to bestow an inappropriate dignity upon their homely reflections by connecting them, through the form in which they are presented to the reader, with that great tradition which has produced the *Principia* of Newton and the Relativity Theory of Einstein, there lies a simple fear of facing the disturbing facts of life. Such people are primarily not looking at outside facts, but looking very hard away from inside ones. They are trying to safeguard themselves against the dangers incidental to the possession of a soul. And the results, of course, are disastrous. What they are

producing by their suave correlations of 'facts' is external order at the expense of internal chaos. Only dig a little way below the surface and you will discover a whole world of fears, shames, contradictory feelings, and vague emotions—the disorder which reigns in the soul of the man who has never purified his desires and perceptions. All their amassing and classification of the easy outside facts which can be apprehended without the emotions being involved, all their seeking for consistency, order, and simple issues generally, betokens nothing else than a flight from reality along the sunless corridors of the mind. What they present as scientific enquiry bears, in reality, all the marks of an elaborate defence mechanism.

This fact is most apparent when one considers the style in which they write their works. One has only to open at random any ordinary book on social questions to be confronted with a string of devitalized locutions, designed expressly to push the experience away from the individual into a harmless, neutral region. Nor is this all. The very structure of the sentences exhibits the same depressing anæmia, the same tendency to run away from the immediate and living into the sphere of the abstract and impersonal. 'There is a fairly widespread recognition of the desirability of enabling an individual,' etc: that is the sort of sentence one is always coming across. And not only is this emasculated prose usually written in the most slovenly manner, but it almost always lacks any sort of rhythm or music. It just oozes along, never relieved by a vigorous phrase, an arresting picture, a vivid image, or any other indication that the writer is seeing anything in front of him but a host of lifeless abstract relationships and correlations. As Mr Chesterton has remarked, a man will reveal the fact that he is a materialist, no matter what the subject on which he is writing. When, one day, people learn to trust their neglected instincts they will know that if what comes out of a man is an effluence of

this description then, however realistic he may appear to himself to be, his fingers are not on the passionate, broken pulse of life.

In fine, in priding yourself on your detachment you are exposing yourself to serious criticism. Even the orthodox psychologists are beginning to suspect the existence of possibilities in this direction. The social scientists are particularly fond of the notion of the co-operation of the various branches of Science for the purpose of solving the problems which are presented to Society. But they had better look out. The 'co-operation' which they may expect to receive from modern psychology may not prove to be of the precise type which they would like to receive. Whatever the limitations of the psycho-analysts, we may safely attribute to them a certain dexterity in recognizing evasions of reality (I say this with important reservations; see Chapter VI.). And the patent deficiency of *libido* in the works of these writers is beginning to attract their attention. Pfister writes as follows on page 174 of his *Applications of Psycho-analysis*:

I find that the empirical theories of those thinkers who may be described as analysts display quite as many traces of repression as those of the metaphysicians, and that even positivism, in its capacity of agnosticism and its disinclination to investigate the kernel of knowledge, is often based on a stifling of the subconscious. There are, indeed, many neurotics among natural scientists, historians, and other practical positivists. Agnosticism is, in many cases, a negative dogmatism, a projection of the neurotic dislike of deeper self-knowledge into the outer world, etc.

People like artists have always known these things, but it is interesting to see that the psychologists are beginning to realize their importance as well. I think that it will not be long before a tendency in any person to investigate human problems in a spirit of excessive detachment will

be regarded by the psychologist with the greatest suspicion. Men and women are different in kind from inanimate objects, and an investigation of their characteristics demands a modification of the method of enquiry appropriate to the study of physics.*

* 'It is the prerogative of genius to introduce radically new concepts and principles in a science, and the curiously baffling difficulties that present psychological theories encounter suggests that a genius is required. And just as relativity theory came, as it were, from a most unexpected region of thought, was the product of a way of thinking quite alien to the materialistic tradition in physics, so we suggest, as a bold but not impossible suggestion, that in psychology entities we would now call mystical may prove to have a part to play in making the world intelligible to us.'

J. W. N. SULLIVAN: *Aspects of Science, Second Series* (1926), pp. 218-219.

‘THE FACTS’

I

IN the last chapter I endeavoured to show that even the most apparently dispassionate sociological enquiry implies, on the part of the investigator, an appeal to introspection which is far more extensive than he imagines. I further pointed out that although the scientific students of humanity are all the time exercising by implication their personal, and largely untrained, judgment upon all sorts of moral and æsthetic problems, they consciously take the greatest pains to cultivate an attitude of the strictest detachment in dealing with their data. Finally, I suggested that this detachment may readily be attributed rather to a shrinking from a more vital type of experience than to genuine dispassionateness of mind. It is now necessary to examine the effect of these confusions upon the actual practice of sociological research.

The object which the sociologist sets himself is that of placing our knowledge of society upon a definite, scientific basis, of substituting for vague, personal judgments on social questions a body of ascertained facts derived from impersonal observation; in a word, of expressing quality in terms of quantity. The possibilities of research in this direction being almost infinite, it follows that he is driven to choose certain aspects of social life for examination rather than others. Clearly this matter of selection is of the first importance. As Prof. Bowley puts it somewhat naïvely in his *Measurement of Social Phenomena* (1915): ‘If we can define the task of sociological measurement, determine what are the facts which are essential to know, and devise a means of ascertaining them, half the task is accomplished.’ We will leave aside for the moment the question of how far the essential facts can be considered

as ascertainable. What it is important to note is that Prof. Bowley has made a candid admission that the value of the results of sociological investigation depends directly on the principles on which the facts are collected. Yet it is extremely doubtful whether the social scientists have fully realized what this implies. Take, for example, the attempt of Prof. Karl Pearson (to be discussed in some detail later) to establish a correlation between shyness and certain physical qualities. What prompted him to choose just that particular quality for examination? A conviction, presumably, that an understanding of its manifestations would illuminate human experience. I am not suggesting that he was mistaken in this view. I am only asking if he had previously considered whether certain other characteristics were not entitled to a prior claim on his attention. In other words, did he just seize on some quality which happened to appeal to his fancy, or did he begin by establishing a sort of hierarchy of qualities, each differing from the other in importance? I strongly suspect that he adopted the first course. Whether this was so or not, the fact remains that the general question of the type of experience to be investigated is of the very first importance, for until the matter has been properly looked into we have absolutely no guarantee that the sociologists, by selecting for examination just what comes into their heads, are not seriously misrepresenting the nature of the facts regarding psychology and social life. There may, for all we know, be a close parallel here with the situation in the domain of physics: for a century or so the scientists went on analysing those properties of matter which had chanced to arouse their curiosity, and it was only with the advent of Faraday that their attention was directed to the endless possibilities of that particular property which we now know as electricity.

The point is that in the development of physics there was in existence no body of external knowledge by refer-

ence to which the direction of research could be determined. The case of sociology is very different. Strictly speaking, before embarking upon any research, the conscientious sociologist should consult a social philosopher (if he can find one) on the question of its desirability. Of course, the great majority of these people have never thought of doing anything of the sort. They simply go on collecting material, hoping, apparently, that the principle on which it has unconsciously been amassed will one day emerge with illuminating results; that they will find out, in fact, what it is that they are trying to find out. They then proceed to regard the facts which they have accumulated in this manner as possessing some peculiar virtue in themselves, apart from the theory which lies behind their selection. Actually, of course, they represent nothing but cross-sections of objects made for a particular purpose. This point, although extremely simple, appears to be continually forgotten—especially by those people who spend their whole lives in feverishly manipulating masses of information. It would seem, in fact, that there has been no perceptible improvement during the century which has elapsed since Coleridge made the following very pertinent remarks on this particular type of mental confusion :

I do not know whether I deceive myself, but it seems to me that the young men, who were my contemporaries, fixed certain principles in their minds, and followed them out to their legitimate consequences, in a way which I rarely witness now. No one seems to have any distinct convictions, right or wrong; the mind is completely at sea, rolling and pitching on the waves of facts and personal experiences. Mr — is, I suppose, one of the rising young men of the day; yet he went on talking the other evening, and making remarks with great earnestness, some of which were palpably irreconcilable with each other. He told me that facts gave birth to, and were the absolute ground of, principles; to which I said, that unless he had a principle of selection he would not have taken notice of

those facts upon which he grounded his principle. You must have a lantern in your hand to give light, otherwise all the materials in the world are useless, for you cannot find them, and if you could, you could not arrange them. 'But then,' said Mr —, '*that* principle of selection came from facts!' 'To be sure!' I replied; 'but there must have been again an antecedent light to see those antecedent facts. The relapse may be carried in imagination backwards for ever—but go back as you may, you cannot come to a man without a previous aim or principle.'*

The dangers involved in the failure to recognize this principle are described very well in the following passage from Pascal (*Pensées*, 99):

The will is one of the principal organs of belief; *not that it creates belief*, but because things are true or false according to the angle from which they are regarded. The will, in preferring one aspect to another, prevents the mind from considering the qualities which it does not like to see; and thus the mind, moving in one piece with the will, stops at looking at the aspect which it likes; and thus it judges by what it sees.

This is what has happened to a painful degree with modern sociology; certain aspects of experience are concentrated upon, with the consequences to which Pascal alludes. We must now consider how this has come about.

I have suggested on an earlier page that one of the typical errors to which the scientific intelligence is subject is that of confounding the measurable with the significant. It was a confusion of this order which lay at the root of nineteenth-century materialism, as it lies equally at the root of what in the twentieth presents itself as 'sociology.' But there is an important difference between the materialistic physicist and the naturalistic sociologist. The former did not doubt that his description of the position was exhaustive. The latter vaguely realizes that his data are limited, but is hard put to it to know what he ought to

* *Table Talk*, September 21, 1830.

do as a result. I have already referred to Prof. Bowley's remark regarding the need to ‘devise a means’ of ascertaining the ‘essential facts.’ He says also on the same page: ‘It may well prove that some measurements are conceivable and desirable, but beyond the wit of man.’ He adds profoundly: ‘And measurements of satisfaction are perhaps in this category.’ True! It is no good denying that the conscientious statistician is confronted with a puzzling task. Only consider, for example, the important question of thrift. Prof. Bowley writes (*op. cit.*, p. 163):

One family will live in comfort and decency on a sum which leaves another family underfed and badly clothed, even though the money is allotted in much the same way. This kind of variation is outside the sphere of statistical measurement, even though artificial measurements by order might conceivably be attempted; for the differences [our statistician is here warming up] are only the outward signs of moral characteristics, and a moral calculus is likely to be purely academic and unreal. None the less, non-measurable mental habits are of the first importance to the social reformer.

Poor Prof. Bowley! It is really all very confusing.

It must not be concluded, of course, that all sociologists share the misgivings of Prof. Bowley. Prof. Mukerjee, for instance, remarks at the beginning of his *Borderlands of Economics* (1925) that ‘even in ethics the quantitative method is no longer inconceivable.’ (Inconceivable, of course, to a sociologist.) But, on the whole, it is becoming apparent that the social scientists are beginning to be afflicted with an uneasy feeling that somewhere or other something has gone wrong. The most perfect example with which I am familiar is that offered by the science of economics. The old and well-tried methods of measurement are being regarded by the younger and more progressive men with increasing mistrust. Consider, for example, a question which is of the first importance to the economist—that of welfare. For what is the use of an

economist if he has nothing illuminating to say on the subject? Yet although vital, it is extremely difficult to deal with effectively. You cannot measure a man's well-being directly. The economist is momentarily thwarted. Then, however, he gets a brilliant idea. Surely a man's welfare may be said to be expressed in the state of his material circumstances? In fact, you might almost say, might you not, that his welfare *is* his material circumstances? The rejoinder which an ordinary intelligent person would make to this preposterous assertion is that it is the most flagrant type of lie. The fight for the 'humanizing' of economics has as yet hardly begun; the doctrine of 'marginalism,' for instance, is just as much an expression of vicious intellectualism as is the classical theory.* To a person who is accustomed to looking at life from the humanistic point of view the crudeness of the methods of the average modern economist comes as a shock. Is it conceivable, he asks, that a responsible being could ever have committed himself to such preposterous statements as the following?

If the money measure of the happiness caused by two events are (*sic*) equal, there is not, in general, any very great difference between the amounts of the happiness in the two cases (p. 131).

It has been assumed that the happiness of life, in so far as it depends on material conditions, may be said to begin when the income is sufficient to yield the *barest* [italics in original] necessities of life: and after that has been attained, an increase by a given percentage of the income will increase that happiness by about the same amount, whatever the income may be (p. 717).

Yet these passages are from the *Principles of Economics*,

* See on the whole question *Free-Thought in the Social Sciences* (1926) by J. A. Hobson, and *The Relation of Wealth to Welfare* (1924) by W. A. Robson.

by the late Prof. Marshall, one of the world's greatest authorities on the subject.

It is not difficult to appreciate the nature of the difficulty with which the Professor is confronted. If you are obliged to have recourse to measurement in order to obtain ‘results,’ then it is clear that, in this particular sphere, no more accurate and convenient scale of reference offers itself than that of pounds, shillings and pence. So that he is perfectly justified in claiming at another point that ‘the measuring-rod of money’ ‘has made economics more exact than any other branch of social science’—which is rather like saying that the classification of pictures by area, or statuary by weight, would introduce a satisfying element of accuracy into the obscure subject of æsthetics.

But there are times when even the economists admit that precision and consistency by themselves are scarcely enough. Prof. Marshall himself has set on record a doubt (*op. cit.*, p. 12) as to ‘how far the exchange value of any element of wealth, whether in collective or individual use, represents accurately the addition which it makes to happiness and well-being.’ Further, we find Prof. Pigou (another of these great authorities) recognizing with consternation (*Economics of Welfare*, p. 85) that ‘there is no guarantee that the effects produced on the part of welfare that can be brought into relation with the measuring-rod of money may not be cancelled by effects of a contrary kind brought about in other parts, or aspects of welfare: and, if this happens, the practical usefulness of our conclusions is wholly destroyed.’ What a distressing situation! Nor does there seem to be any obvious way out of the difficulty. For, given that ‘a moral calculus is likely to be purely academic and unreal,’ the vital influences in the situation will remain always beyond the range of sociological investigation—that is to say, to discover anything of a truly significant nature the social investiga-

tor must commit himself to making estimates based on personal observation in the old-fashioned way, and thus cease to be a scientist, save in a very extended sense of the term. The long road has led, as it should have been obvious that it was leading, to introspection. As Prof. Bowley says, in speaking about the investigation of social position: 'This is a task for a critic of life and manners rather than for a statistician.'

Yet this is a situation that, as Prof. Hobson very convincingly shows, most economists are very far from being prepared to face. Prof. Pigou, for instance, after one glance into the terrifying chasm of 'values,' appears to have retreated as far as possible from its edge and to have done his best ever since to keep his glance fixed in another direction.

What is it that impels these theorists to cling so obstinately to a materialistic conception of the problem of welfare? Is it nothing more than a very natural temptation to sacrifice the total truth to the beguiling demands of consistency? Or is it rather a matter of education? I would submit that the real causes lie deeper. The economist who persists in mechanizing our conception of the economic situation is really nothing else than a materialist whose crude sympathies happen to be finding expression in a highly intellectualized form. Like murder, materialism will out. In the sphere of art or religion its manifestations are not always so difficult to identify. In the field of apparently dispassionate science, on the contrary, such identification is a somewhat more difficult process; it is necessary, on occasion, to call in the technician. But its presence can infallibly be detected in the end.

2

The sociologists are not only insufficiently aware of the limitations which are imposed upon them by the restricted nature of the measurable, or, indeed, of the purely ascertainable; they appear to be a long way from realizing that even what they *can* measure is, just on account of its measurability, of no great importance. The measurable coincides very nearly with the actual, palpable, and immediate. And the actual, palpable, and immediate have always appealed to the naturalistic man as being somehow more real than what is intuitively perceived. Hence, the person of this type who happens also to be scientifically minded is impelled to accumulate masses of information on the level of the concrete and objective, fortified, moreover, with the conviction that he is concentrating on those ‘facts’ which are disregarded or evaded by the ‘unworldly.’ It is true that the so-called ‘unworldly’ are inclined to attach less importance to them than are the sociologists. But this is not without a reason.

What strikes one most forcibly about the ‘facts’ of the statisticians is what I might term their secondary character. They may be of value for a variety of administrative and organizing purposes, for politicians and officials who are perpetually called upon to deal with the cumulative results of invisible interior processes. But they can never throw any illumination upon the deeper movements of life. The social enquirer is bound by the nature of the methods which he has adopted to come upon the scene only when the accident has already happened, when the creative influences which have been at work are already exhausted. What he tabulates, analyses, and correlates are the *resultants* of the interaction of an infinity of subtle and vital forces. He passes his time in making painstaking

descriptions of crystals which have already assumed a definite and irrevocable shape. It is only the outside circumstances of the case which can ever be discovered by this method. The facts which can be ascertained are those which relate to the state of the environment, and not to the tendencies which have combined to bring that state into being.* Every situation with which the sociologist deals is the ultimate result of a series of small personal and domestic crises. The outer conditions which he investigates represent only the final expression of an infinite number of minor conflicts in the hearts of all sorts of individuals. What determines the circumstances, not only of a man and his family, but of a village, a city, and a nation, is an endless series of decisions, insignificant in themselves, but cumulatively of overpowering force. Such decisions are being made all the time by all kinds of people in all kinds of predicaments, and it is they that determine the final situation. The plane of economics is exclusively that of *spent forces*. As Prof. Babbitt remarks :

When studied with any degree of thoroughness, the economic problem will be found to run into the political problem, the political problem, in turn, into the philosophical problem, and the philosophical problem itself to be almost indissolubly bound up at last with the religious problem.

What sociologists forget is that every action in the world is performed by a living man or woman, and that the character of the resulting state of society is the direct result of the states of mind of all these numberless individuals. Rents do not go up by themselves, but are raised by human beings. Food is adulterated, labour exploited, by people who have chosen to adopt that course rather than another. It follows that by concerning

* The only orthodox sociologist who appears to have realized the significance of this point is Prof. E. J. Urwick. See his *Philosophy of Social Progress* (second edition, 1920).

yourself with the character of the individual person, you are dealing at the root with the functioning of any organization, from a parish council to the League of Nations. The sociologists, however, are so preoccupied with ‘handling’ wide, general movements of almost astronomical regularity as to forget that they are nothing but the ultimate expressions of individual states of mind. They acquire the notion that economic life somehow goes on by itself. They even go so far as to make *it* the norm and to measure more fundamental conditions in its terms.*

I am not suggesting that sociological research is not a perfectly legitimate activity. I am only submitting that owing to its nature it must necessarily be of subsidiary importance to that interest in human beings which is exhibited by art and religion. The sociologist takes things as he finds them. What he finds is a huge, diseased growth of civilization with its giant hotels, its craze for speed, its great stores filled with a multitude of ugly and unnecessary articles, its thousands of oppressed workers, and its revolting slums. But what is all this but the bodying out in terms of life of that selfishness, coarseness, and materialism which it is the object of the true humanist to eradicate from the soul? It is in the heart that evil is conceived, and it is, therefore, the students of the heart who are dealing with the roots of the social problem. It is the burning core of life which is the important point, not the condensation of vital forces on its periphery in the form of cold ‘conditions.’ In the words of Sir William Davenant, ‘truth, narrative, and past is the idol of historians (who worship a dead thing) and truth operative, and by effects continually alive, is the mistress of poets, who hath not her existence in matter, but in reason.’

Science, when applied to the study of human beings,

* It is this tendency that vitiates Sir Josiah Stamp’s otherwise clear-headed study of *The Christian Ethic as an Economic Factor* (1926).

must, of necessity, deal only with their least vital characteristics, with those aspects of their nature which are constant, invariable, and mechanical, and therefore susceptible to the same kind of treatment as gases, liquids, and solids. And this circumstance explains, perhaps, why it is that people whose instincts are truly alive refuse to believe that anything very illuminating can ever be produced by the compilation of statistical tables and sociological memoirs. On the other hand, they respond to the appeals of religion and art. For they recognize, with a greater or smaller degree of clearness, that the concentration by the artist and mystic on the individual and personal elements in life constitutes a preoccupation with the ultimate causes of all external circumstances.

3

So much for the unilluminating nature of purely external facts. But to penetrate to a deeper level and approach nearer the source of life, the sociologist must, as we have seen, appeal more fully to his introspection. And the more he does so, the more he reveals his emotional limitations and the more the value of his work is prejudiced as a consequence. The alternatives before him seem to be: accuracy at the expense of acquiring merely mechanical information; or implied personal judgment at the expense of obtaining hopelessly vague results. We will now consider the second of these. As my object is throughout more to suggest lines of possible enquiry than to follow them up, I will select from the mass of evidence available no more than a solitary example of the kind of conclusions to which I refer.

It is a typical production of the ruthlessly scientific school of research—a paper published by Prof. Karl Pearson in 1923 on *The Relationship of Health to the*

Psychical and Physical Characters in School Children. In this memoir we find the author employing the most refined mathematical methods to establish and analyse the relations subsisting between, on the one hand, various physical qualities, such as age and athletic power, and, on the other, certain psychic qualities like ‘conscientiousness,’ ‘shyness,’ ‘temper,’ and ‘popularity.’ The precision and integrity with which the research is carried out are remarkable; it is evident that the author is seriously concerned with arriving at the truth. What, however, completely staggers the non-technical reader who approaches the study from the ordinary human angle is that he is capable of combining such extreme care in analysing the results obtained with such a completely uncritical attitude towards the material itself. We may concede that it is possible up to a point to measure a child’s physical characteristics. Its psychic characteristics are, however, a very different matter. They are to be approached with reverence and circumspection; we are dealing now with the soul. Prof. Pearson does not appear to be overburdened with reverence, but he is certainly very interested in enquiring into the nature of the qualities mentioned above. (We may note in passing that one would have expected some recognition on his part of the fact that ‘popularity’ is a quality of a completely different *order* from the others. To measure a child’s popularity is to measure, not a characteristic of the child, but, indirectly, the feelings of other children about it. Again, confusion is caused by a certain overlapping. Clearly shyness and vivacity are qualities which tend to vary with one another. But I suppose if it is only statistics you’re after, such little points can be safely disregarded.) He is anxious to measure them. But—incredible as it may appear—one finds, on reading his paper, that he has not thought it necessary to define what he means by his terms. The only conclusion that it is possible to draw is that he considers

that the meaning which the reader is expected to attach to them is self-evident. I can only say that it is a long way from being self-evident to me.

Of course, they are comprehensible—in a sense. It is obvious that psychological discussion cannot be maintained without the employment of general terms. 'Proud,' 'loyal,' 'generous' are words which all stand for definite qualities expressed by individuals in their behaviour in daily life. When St Paul speaks of 'covetousness' he means something specific and identifiable. On the other hand, we do not come to any real grips with the problems presented by the conduct of a person until we have learned the particular way in which his pride or loyalty manifests itself, seen what it is tinged with, when it springs up, what allays it, what draws it out, deflects it, or prevents it from manifesting. In other words, realistic description involves coming down to details. And since the deeper we probe, the more subtle the emotional movements which we detect, it follows that we are obliged to have recourse to art to convey to others the nature of the tissue of psychic elements which we have perceived. Of course, it is sometimes possible for someone with the vision of a poet to seize the most vital element in a man and characterize it in a phrase. But he does this only after having taken into consideration all sorts of delicate considerations. Further—and this is the essence of the matter—the only way in which these more intimate facts about anybody can be discovered is by having concern for them, by watching them with a certain tenderness. The scientist who thinks that he can reap the fruits of the passion of the heart merely by straining the attention of the mind is being sadly misled.

But to continue. For those of us who are not poets, terms like 'conscientious,' 'shy,' and 'vivacious' are nothing but labels which we hastily and insensitively affix to very delicate complexes of feelings which we have not

the desire or the capacity to analyse. Our sociologists are uniformly extraordinarily careless about this point. If, for instance, we look into the works of Prof. Graham Wallas, we find him using all sorts of terms like Love, Happiness, Honour (note the continual use of capitals; the sentimentalist is always giving himself away in some little way or other) as if he were talking about objects as definite as the Bank of England or the Suez Canal. It is only necessary to examine the examples which he gives of the manifestations of such qualities to be made to realize the urgent need of a *Critique of Satisfaction* in dealing with such theorists. This is his ideal of Honour: ‘In a society where respect for law is inculcated on all, a man who is struck may satisfy honour *by prosecuting his opponent without returning the blow*’! (*Our Social Heritage*, p. 187). I cannot resist appending an extract from St Teresa, if only to bring out the difference between the attitude of the kindly dreamer and that of the ruthless spiritual inquisitor:

. . . she (the Soul) groans at having ever been sensitive to points of honour, at the illusion that made her ever see as honour what the world calls by that name. Now she sees in this name nothing more than an immense lie, of which the world remains a victim. She discovers, in the new light from above, that in genuine honour there is nothing spurious, that to be faithful to this honour is to give our respect to what deserves to be respected really, and to consider as nothing, or as less than nothing, whatsoever perishes and is not agreeable to God. . . . She laughs when she sees grave persons, persons of orison, caring for points of honour for which she now feels profoundest contempt. It is suitable to the dignity of their rank to act thus, they pretend, and it makes them more useful to others. But she knows that in despising the dignity of their rank for the pure love of God they would do more good in a single day than they would effect in ten years by preserving it.

(Quoted by William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 415.)

The values of such thinkers are not really very much better than those of ordinary social intercourse. In so far as we are indifferent to the niceties of human character we live in a world in which children are 'nice,' girls 'jolly,' and men and women 'rotters' and 'good sorts.' If we become interested in the realities of life we find it necessary to adopt a more subtle terminology. In Prof. Pearson's research the observation of the children was deputed to their (presumably psychologically untrained) teachers. These, of course, just in so far as they were sensitive people, would have found the questions set them impossible to answer.

What Prof. Pearson has done in this particular enquiry is to correlate more or less definite physical facts with a collection of hopelessly vague judgments. I do not say that his results may not have a very, very rough value. But I do want to point out what he has *not* done. As I see the matter, the only psychological value of the resulting document lies in the fact that it does definitely establish one correlation—that between sociological research on the one hand, and absence of imagination on the other. But even this would hardly seem to justify its being published in a sumptuous format by no less a body than the Cambridge University Press.

SCIENCE AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

I

THE chapter which has just been concluded was devoted to a consideration of the methods employed by modern sociologists in dealing with the data of ordinary social life. We must now examine briefly their attitude to experience of an exceptional order—that of the human consciousness in its more exalted states.

The world is filled with people who assert that as the result of prayer and meditation they have succeeded in gaining a glimpse of planes of being infinitely more wonderful than any which are accessible to the normal understanding, that they have become aware of the immediate presence of Christ, or that they are at times overshadowed or inspired by disembodied entities. As a scientist who is interested in every type of phenomenon which life presents, the sociologist very naturally turns his attention to the reaction by others to this alleged transcendental element in life, and proceeds to analyse it in the same spirit as that in which he deals with ordinary phenomena. And nobody can possibly take the least exception to his procedure. The only question is whether, in view of the peculiar nature of his subject-matter, his efforts in this direction are not doomed to produce only the most negative results.

We have already taken note of the difficulties which beset the social scientists in their selection of subjects for research. The same problem confronts also the scientific student of the spiritual world. On examining the nature of his interest in this type of experience, we find that materialistic prejudices have again exerted their influence. For it cannot be denied that scientific psychologists have a tendency, in dealing with the transcendental, to fasten

upon those aspects of it which are of a dramatic and spectacular order. The comparatively trivial phenomena of spiritualism, for instance, appeal to them as being of quite disproportionate importance. Again, even of that brilliant and sympathetic student of religion, William James, it may fairly be said in the words of Prof. Babbitt that 'as soon as he passes from the naturalistic to the humanistic level' he becomes 'wildly romantic,' and that 'he is plainly more preoccupied with the intensity than with the centrality of the experience.' The same tendency is evident in a different form in Prof. Leuba's recent and far less attractive work on mysticism; it is the vision and dreams on which he concentrates his attention. And in much the same way those emancipated modern scientific writers who have come to realize that reality can be contacted by the mind in other ways than through the channel of Science are, it would seem, more alive to those 'values' which are positively hurled at one by a masterpiece of writing or a great symphony than to any others. In a word, the conception which the ordinary type of scientist entertains of the spiritual tends to be of a somewhat gross order; he exhibits a preference for the coarse and immediate manifestations of the inner life. The consequence is that once again an initial bias leads to the accumulation of data which are not really representative.

But even when the scientific psychologist is completely detached in respect of his choice of material, the fact remains that his interpretation of it is necessarily conditioned by the state of his own consciousness. This point must be developed at some length.

2

We have seen in the preceding chapter that the economists, in endeavouring to deal with the notion of welfare, resorted to utilizing a perfectly preposterous scale

of reference known as 'the measuring-rod of money.' Yet the step which they took, ridiculous as it was, was comprehensible enough; the idea of measurement inevitably implies the existence of some sort of standard to which your experience can be referred. The psychologists find themselves in the same position. It is impossible to get along, either as a practical psychiatrist or a psychological theorist, without employing conceptions like 'normal,' 'healthy,' and 'sane.' You cannot talk about disease until you have decided what you mean by health. In other words, the observers of the subjective nature of man must, no less than those investigators who are concerned with his physical characteristics, possess a common ground on which they can all meet. It will be worth while considering its boundaries.

It is clear in the first instance that the concept 'normal behaviour' must rest upon a statistical basis—that is to say, although no given individual is, strictly speaking, 'normal,' there can be legitimately abstracted from our experience of men and women a certain type of behaviour to which that of the great run of mankind tends to approximate, and from which no person can afford to depart widely without being rightly characterized as aberrant. All experience is on the side of the psychologist when he asserts that it is abnormal for a man to desert his children or to have absolutely no interests in life, and it is a suspicious indication if a person cannot remember the simplest instructions which have been given to him. The overwhelming majority agree in repudiating a large range of states of mind as being in some way unhealthy, perverted, or vicious. This is simply to say that psychology, like the administration of justice and the principles of ordinary social organization, rests ultimately on a basis of common sense. Human beings are recognized to be social animals, with certain religious feelings which cannot be dismissed, and possessing various brutal pro-

clivities which society has to keep in check. To take your stand upon common sense, however, is merely to define the *minimum* of desirable conduct, to determine that level below which a man must not be permitted to fall. But this does not take us very far. It is, of course, necessary to establish a low-tide mark of this nature. Nevertheless, the significant dividing line from the point of view of the future of the race is not so much that between the sub-human and the human as that between the human and the incipiently super-human. What we need to know urgently is not the difference between the mentally deficient individual and the duly certified normal citizen, but the difference between the true seer and the phantast. The semi-idiot is a nuisance, but he cannot do very much harm; he is merely isolated from the rest of life as the result of arrested development. But the false prophet can do a very great deal of harm indeed. Now, the norm to which the physician is always striving to bring his patient back is that of the behaviour of the great mass of the population of the world, which consists of sane, unimaginative people who have never ventured on such a thing as 'living dangerously' and who, at the same time, would all be duly 'passed' by the analyst as being sufficiently free from neurosis (it must be admitted that we are all a little mad somewhere) to be entitled to be left alone. As long as Jones does his job with a certain degree of efficiency, treats his wife and children with reasonable consideration, and does not advance revolutionary ideas, he will not come into conflict with either public opinion, the law, or the asylum authorities. Let him, however, reach out in any way after what he regards as a loftier type of life, and one or more of them will certainly turn their eyes upon him. It is with the entry into the equation of such qualities as idealism and imagination that the difficulties begin. If that Something in the background was not ever driving man on to surpass

himself continually, the pursuit of psychology and social science would, indeed, be an easy business.

Let us now examine the attitude which the professional psychologist adopts to Jones when he begins to get—shall we say—a little out of hand, when he takes to seeing visions or interpreting the commands of Christ with disconcerting literalness. As a scientist the psychologist tries to keep as near as possible to the observed facts. He examines Jones, watches the faces he pulls, listens to the sounds he makes and interprets them by the method of Implied Introspection to which I have referred—that is to say, he fixes on the feelings which would call forth similar manifestations on his own part. Given that in the first place he is capable of making a just estimate of the nature of his own feelings, and that in the second place he is clear in his mind as to which of them correspond and which do not correspond to the normal feelings of the mass of humanity, he will probably be able to deal with Jones fairly effectively. If Jones becomes inordinately inconsequent in his speech, rolls his eyes alarmingly, or foams at the mouth, the observer will rightly say: ‘This is abnormal.’ The psychologist has a certain range of experience both of sanity and abnormality (though he usually has not studied the first state sufficiently), and can identify the manifestations of each as they are presented to him. But let us now suppose that Jones makes a physical or mental gesture which, if he himself made it, would correspond to no feeling which to his knowledge he has ever experienced. How is he to determine whether it is an out-of-the-way manifestation of mental derangement, or an exalted form of a perfectly healthy consciousness?

The attitude adopted by scientific psychologists when confronted with such problems has changed considerably in the course of the last half-century. The Victorian scientist was disposed to dismiss as ‘morbid,’ ‘hysterical,’

or 'degenerate' all states of mind which suggested any departure from the point of view of the unimaginative, self-satisfied materialist. His present-day successor, on the contrary, is beginning to treat them with increasing respect. Why? Not, it must be noted, as a result of any development in scientific method, but because his æsthetic and moral perceptions are of a superior order. He is a more enlightened person. He has a wider and deeper consciousness or, in the language of Hulme, a higher standard of satisfaction. Modern psychologists—or, at least, the best of them—no longer dismiss the visions of a man as unimportant because he happens to be also an epileptic (Dostoevsky has rendered a useful service here) or think that all heightened susceptibility can be explained away as 'neuroticism.' Yet even here it is to be observed that they are more tolerant of such manifestations, not because they can necessarily understand them directly, but because they cannot fail to see that they are associated with other qualities, such as the manliness of so many great mystics, which are of sufficiently obvious value to appeal to them, and which justify them in not placing the individual who possesses them below the common-sense norm. Once again, it is the minimum which counts.

What it comes to, then, is that the psychologist's evaluation of exceptional experience varies directly with the degree of his personal cultural development. He can only appreciate properly what he knows from his own inner life. If that inner life is rich—as that of Jung is obviously more rich than that of Freud—he is able to deal intelligently with a wider range of data. If it is not, no amount of conscientious adherence to scientific method will compensate for his native lack of finesse. On the contrary, it will only serve to produce confusion. When he is confronted with a manifestation superior in quality to any with which he is naturally acquainted, he is bound to mis-

represent its significance. For he will inevitably describe it, either as a new variety, or as a new combination, of those qualities with which he is already familiar. I have alluded on an earlier page to Prof. Otto's conception of the 'numinous.' The psychologist who has no sense of this quality as an element in life is bound to classify it under the heading of what it presents itself as being in his own experience—a subtle manifestation of ordinary fear, a distorted expression of sex feeling, or the like; not as something different *in kind* from these. Consider this further passage from *The Idea of the Holy* (p. 48):

The phrase 'he loves me' is verbally identical, whether it is said by a child of its father or by a girl of her lover. But in the second case a 'love' is meant which is at the same time 'something more' (viz., *sexual* love), and something more not only in quantity, but in quality. So, too, the phrase, 'We ought to fear, love, and trust him' (Luther's amplification of the First Commandment) is verbally identical, whether it refers to the relation of child to father or to that of man to God. But again in the second case these ideas are infused with a meaning of which none but the religious-minded man can have any comprehension or, indeed, any inkling, whose presence makes—e.g., the 'fear of God'—'something more' than any fear of a man, qualitatively, not merely quantitatively, though retaining the essence of the most genuine reverence felt by the child for its father. And Suso means in the same way to distinguish 'love' and 'love of God' when he says: 'There was never a string so dulcet-toned, but ceased to sound if stretched to a withered frame; a heart poor in love can no more understand speech rich in love than a German can an Italian.'

The psychologist who is insensitive to differences of the type established above, and who is accordingly led to treat as identical states which are, in reality, appropriate to entirely different levels of being, is doing something more than simply leaving certain aspects of experience out of account. He is dealing with them in appearance

by passing them off as being of an inferior order. The consequence is that instead of their being repudiated openly, as militarism, for instance, is repudiated by the pacifist, or the State by the anarchist, they gently disappear from view, transformed into different and less disturbing manifestations by the legerdemain of scientific classification. What is particularly dangerous in this is the apparent *completeness* of the resulting scheme. What the psychologist does is to present us with a picture of experience which is painted in a limited number of colours. However rich and varied the pigments of the object which he is reproducing, they have to be represented in the copy in terms of the restricted range of tones in his emotional palette. Had the artist left blank spaces in his picture corresponding to the shades which he was unable to match, we should know where we are. But he has not done so. He has covered the whole of the canvas, and the result is that it is only the more perspicacious observer who can see how he has misrepresented the truth.

The point is of particular importance in connection with therapeutics. The principle should never be lost sight of that no psychologist, no matter how resourceful he may be, and how elaborate the technical apparatus at his disposal, can ever avoid reducing the experience with which he is dealing to the level of his own. If our dentist proves to be insensitive to the appeal of El Greco or Brahms, the circumstance need not deter us from entrusting him with the care of our teeth. In the case of the psychologist, however, the nature of his spiritual values will in the end determine the quality of his solution to the problem—no matter how remotely connected with it they may appear to be. In the face of all possible developments in analysis and classification, the obstinate fact remains that the products of any consciousness are incomprehensible to another which is pitched upon a lower level. What happens only too often, however, in therapeutic

treatment is that people of superior sensibility are induced, through a confusion of mind which is only one of the worst of their symptoms, to permit themselves to be psychologically adjusted by men or women who, in actuality, are too gross in composition to appreciate the real nature of their difficulties. The result is very often a 'successful' cure. But it is a cure which has only been achieved by keying down the psyche to a more naturalistic level of activity. Its discords are, in a sense, resolved, but the balance, serenity, and integration which are attained are secured by inducing the subject to relinquish his yearnings for a deeper spiritual order of being, the movements of his spirit being represented to him as constituting a flight from 'realities.' He is brought back to the confines of a world which proves to be that of the materialistic and unimaginative man. Naturally the release of tension which is involved in such a relapse produces a feeling of relief, just as it would, in a sense, be a relief to, say, Mr D. H. Lawrence if by some piece of adroit manifestation he could be deprived of his artistic perceptions and rendered content with the cinema, the daily paper, and an occasional pint of beer. But that hardly constitutes an argument for psychological healing.

The reduction of differences in kind to differences in degree can only result in the degradation of the spiritual and the glorification of the natural. This was clearly realized by Hulme, who suggested in an interesting essay on *Humanism and the Religious Attitude* that the confusions which have become so prevalent in European thought since the Renaissance may be attributed to the persistence with which thinkers have failed to distinguish between two radically different levels of being. Just as the old-fashioned materialists vainly attempted to interpret all vital phenomena in terms of matter and force, so, according to Hulme, have the humanists distorted the true situation by trying to make the ethical and religious

synonymous with the human. In actuality, he points out, they are different *in kind*; the sphere of religion is not an extension of that of the human, but rather, in a sense, its negation. He writes on page 8 of *Speculations*:

It is necessary to realize that there is an absolute, and not a relative, difference between humanism (which we can take to be the highest expression of the vital) and the religious spirit. The *divine* is not *life* at its intensest. It contains, in a way, an almost *anti-vital* element; quite different, of course, from the non-vital character of the outside physical region. . . .

In fine, there is a natural hierarchy in experience, and nothing but danger can result from attempting to obliterate it. Enlightened spiritual teachers have always been aware of this fact. Consider this passage from Swedenborg:

He who does not know the method of Divine order in respect to degrees cannot comprehend in what manner the heavens are distinct, nor, indeed, the nature of the internal and the external man. . . . Degrees are of two kinds; there are continuous degrees and degrees that are not continuous. Continuous degrees are as the degrees of diminution of light, from the flame to darkness. . . . But degrees that are not continuous but discrete are distinguished as prior and posterior, as cause and effect, and as that which produces and that which is produced. . . . He who does not acquire a perception of these degrees can, by no means, have a knowledge of the distinctions of the heavens, and the distinctions of the interior and exterior faculties of man; nor of the distinction between the spiritual world and the natural world; nor of the distinction between the spiritual man and his body: and, therefore, cannot understand what and whence correspondences and representations are, nor what is the nature of influx. Sensual men do not comprehend these distinctions; for they make increase and decrease even according to these degrees continuous. They are, therefore, unable to conceive of the spiritual except as a purer natural (*Heaven and Hell*, 38).

The last sentence provides a key, not only to the bewildering phenomenon of psycho-analysis, but to half the confusions which are prevalent in modern thought.

3

But whatever the discrimination with which the psychologist may be equipped, he is debarred from penetrating to the heart of the experience which he is investigating. As a scientist, it is his business to deal with conditions, to establish correlations, and to formulate general laws. There are, of course, certain levels of human experience which can be profitably dealt with in this manner: fatigue, sense-discrimination, attention, and the like. But in what sense can the same technique be applied to emotional states—and particularly to emotional states of a very special order? For it is necessarily implied in all scientific procedure that the objects examined must be both common to all observers and accessible to them. But mystical and other exalted states of mind can only be understood from within; you can only differentiate them from others when you know what these others are. Nor can you even reproduce them within you for inspection at will. The very word 'exaltation' connotes an exceptional transcending of the normal state of consciousness. Jacob Boehme confessed that he could only understand his own writings when he was in the same state of mind as that in which he composed them. And Dr Otto writes in his *Naturalism and Religion*:

The web of religious certainty is much more finely and delicately woven, and more susceptible to injury than the more robust one of ordinary knowledge. Moreover, where religious certainty has attained its highest point in a believing mind, and is greater rather than less than the certainty of what is apprehended by the senses or experienced day by day, this characteristic difference is most easily discerned. . . . The

truths of the religious outlook cannot be put on the same level as those of ordinary and everyday life. And when the mind passes from one to the other, it does so with the consciousness that the difference is in kind. The knowledge of God and eternity, and the real value, transcending space and time, of our own inner being, cannot even in form be mixed up with the trivial truths of the normal human understanding or the conclusions of science. In fact, the truths of religion exhibit, in quite a special way, the character of all ideal truths, which are not really true for every day at all, but are altogether bound up with exalted states of feeling. . . . They weave themselves together out of the most inward and subtle experiences, out of impressions which are coarsened in the very act of expressing them.

And even when we are concerned with less lofty levels of inspiration, it remains true that we can only understand the description by another of his inner condition in so far as we are tuned to his own pitch ourselves. To take an extreme example, it was said by Benjamin Whichcote that 'if you have a revelation from God, I must have a revelation from God, too, before I can believe you.' So that for a really illuminating treatment of such states—and I would emphasise the fact that I am speaking just as much here also of that steady vision of life with the inward eye, which is not only more important, but infinitely more common, than the ecstasies and trances to which the scientist prefers to turn his attention in this connection—we must consult the analysis by mystics and such people of their own states. But such an analysis will equally be unintelligible to us if we have not enjoyed similar experiences ourselves. Nor will it be scientific, for the reason that it has not been conducted in terms of the general concepts of science.

Since, then, the mystics are unscientific and the scientists deficient in mystical perception, it is clear that this region of experience can never be dealt with very effectively by Science. The mystics (I use the term throughout in the

widest possible sense) are usually, of course, content to ignore scientific considerations. The scientists, on the other hand, are very far from being resigned to leaving the spiritual world alone. So we find that a considerable literature has accumulated, not, of course, strictly scientific in spirit—since descriptive psychology implies an extensive appeal to introspection—but as scientific as is possible under the circumstances, which is devoted to the task of relating these more out-of-the-way states of consciousness to those of the everyday world. The results which are produced by this research are necessarily negative and unilluminating. How could they be otherwise? Consider, for example, William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. This book is easily the most able and sympathetic of its type, written, as it is, by a man of a warm and generous temperament who was yet endowed with an exceptionally keen intellect. And yet there is something unsatisfactory and even a little silly about it. It represents in the end an ingenious attempt to get something for nothing. To collect specimens of passionate and intimate experience and then proceed to evaluate them in cold blood, having, moreover, first laid down the proviso that whatever the degree to which you may feel with your deepest instincts that any one of them relates to a deep reality, you are to maintain a suspended judgment with regard to the postulate which the writers themselves make as to the source of their inspiration, is to confront the findings of the heart with those of the head in an unreal and unprofitable sense. What is denied by implication is once more the principle that experience has to be paid for. You cannot, merely by being very, very scrupulous and painstaking, find out what other people have discovered by passion, sacrifice, faith, and suffering. The man you are studying only comes into existence for you in so far as he is perceived with a sympathy born of similar experience. You cannot leave love out and expect to know what other

souls have made their own as the result of a process of courageous living. You cannot speak intelligently from the outside until you have been inside first. Expressed in technical language, this is to say that the only experience which can be profitably analysed is that which has first been subjective for the investigator. In spite of this obvious fact, however, the psychologists devote their best powers to examining experience which is admittedly alien to them. One finds William James, for instance, writing on page 378 of his famous book :

Whether my treatment of mystical states will shed more light or darkness, I do not know, for my own constitution shuts me out from their enjoyment almost entirely, and I can speak of them only at second hand.

Now this is really somewhat surprising. We tend, of course, to accept a remark of this type without question, because we have been drugged with the atmosphere of the curious world in which such ideas are conceived. But if a man said to us, 'Whether my treatment of Marine Boilers will shed more light or darkness, I do not know, for my own constitution shuts me out from their enjoyment almost entirely, and I can speak of them only at second hand,' we should probably be very much astonished.

Some pages further on James provides us with a painful confirmation of his self-confessed inability to speak from the inside by referring to that touchstone of pseudo-mysticism, Jefferies' *Story of My Heart*, as 'a wonderful and splendid mystic rhapsody.' It must be understood, of course, that in using such generous language he is only speaking for a moment unofficially, as it were, from his heart—even if it is not a very discerning heart. What he would say *qua* scientist would be something like: 'Of course, if there *was* such a thing as a God, this would, as I see it, be a remarkable revelation of His nature. On the

other hand, etc.' For the consistent scientific psychologist is condemned to take up his stand on the periphery of experience. Its burning core is no longer for *him*. He must confine himself to observing its outer aspects, the variations which occur on the level of ultimate expression. If, for instance, a man tells him that he has just felt the presence of an angel, he can do no more than add the case to his already lengthy list of examples of what he will probably describe as 'auditory and visual hallucinations.' If another man informs him that he has been told by an inner voice of unmistakable authority that he must leave his shop and go out to preach the Word of God among the negroes, he can only record his testimony by the side of that of the man who was persuaded the day before by a voice of, it appears, equally unmistakable authority to walk out of his door and murder his sweetheart. If, again, he is confronted with a person who by fixing his mind on the idea of God has gained access to a new and wonderful source of serenity and power, he is obliged, for the purposes of science, to describe him as having drawn on a deeper level of the energy available in his Unconscious. In fine, the scientific psychologist is debarred owing to the principles on which he is working from making any judgments regarding immediate truth. He can deal only with the formal side of experience. Assuming, for the sake of example, that it is possible for individuals to establish some sort of contact with beings on super-physical planes of existence, the psychologist has no means at his disposal of distinguishing a genuine subjective experience of such contact from an illusory one. For both experiences are only dealt with by him on the level of sensation. In the same way, God only becomes a reality for him in so far as He manifests in terms of *libido*. Science knows only the image on the screen; what projects that image it is never able to say.

The scientific psychologists are thus reduced to the level

of composers who are engaged in setting up the manuscript of a book which is written in a language of which they can read the characters, although they have no notion of the ideas for which they stand. What this type of research leads to is an enormous accumulation of knowledge *about* psychological experience. But to know *about* the vital, creative movements in life is to be a very long way from being in a position to control it, or to see what it is going to do next. What the psychologist is doing most of the time is to familiarize himself with the outer distinguishing marks of the vivid experience of others. The difference between this outer knowledge on the one hand, and insight on the other, is extreme. Thus if, on approaching my home, I say, 'The light's on in the sitting-room; that means my wife's at home,' the statement connotes an inside acquaintance with the conditions which are implied by the illumination of the room. If, on the other hand, I say, 'As I came along the road I saw a light on in the sitting-room of Mr Simpson, the undertaker; this means that he is at home,' what is implied is nothing more than a knowledge of correspondences, since, never having been in the house, I have no idea what it is like inside. It is only those who can watch the movements of the spirit from the inside who have any real hold on reality. I can only understand a remarkable personality in so far as I can identify myself with him by imaginative projection. Otherwise I am doomed to be continually bewildered and surprised by his apparently inconsequent changes of front. But imaginative projection involves both love and suffering. Once again it has become apparent that the human spirit, unlike inanimate nature, will not yield up its secrets to those who bring to the work of understanding it nothing more than industriousness and clarity of mind.

4

All we can hope for from scientific investigation is, then, a treatment of the purely exterior aspects of experience. This fact should be sufficiently obvious to a reflective mind. Nevertheless, one finds large numbers of modern educated men and women turning hopefully to 'psychology' for guidance in the more intimate problems of personal life. They feel obscurely that if they can only familiarize themselves with the conclusions of the experts, they will be provided with a means of conducting their lives on really scientific principles. This, as I see the matter, amounts to a serious misconception of the true state of things. It implies, not only a failure to realize the limited character of scientific information, but, in addition, an insufficient appreciation of the nature of that type of knowledge which we need to possess for the purpose of discriminating living.

Anybody who wishes to gain an illuminating indication of the gap which exists between scientific theory and human practice in this field cannot do better than glance through Prof. William McDougall's recently published *Character and the Conduct of Life* (1927)—a work which represents the attempt of a distinguished psychologist to apply to actual problems of life the conclusions which he has arrived at after over thirty years' study of technical psychology. The result, to my mind at least, is disappointing. Prof. McDougall has failed to demonstrate that even a prolonged concern with the scientific side of psychology necessarily confers any marked advantage upon an individual who sets up as a practical spiritual adviser. The conclusions which he offers the reader prove, it is true, to be those of a humane and mature man of the world, but that man of the world has not been precluded by his technical studies from exhibiting on many occasions a

conventional, unenlightened, at times even vulgar attitude. And it is significant, I think, that throughout the work he fails to rise above the level of pure empiricism; what he offers the reader is really nothing more than a collection of more or less happily conceived rules of thumb. And this, with all respect to such an eminent authority, will not really take us very far. What we require if we are to save our souls is a modernized version of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of Manly Character*—a book which, whatever its defects in other respects, not only surveys experience consistently from a central standpoint, but aims throughout at elucidating fundamental principles rather than providing rules for every occasion.

The essence of the situation lies, I think, in the simple fact that science, for reasons which are perfectly comprehensible, deals with human experience *for its own ends*. What the psychologist selects for examination are those aspects of behaviour which offer themselves most readily to systematic treatment; those which are measurable with some degree of precision, or which can be most effectively correlated with the results of investigation in other fields. The conclusions at which he arrives may or may not be of value for the purpose of illuminating experience; usually they are of little value to the realistic thinker. But the important point is that his inquiries are not conducted as a result of any direct concern with the problem of adaptation as it confronts the individual. The consequence is that for that knowledge which we need in order to orientate ourselves discerningly to our environment we are obliged to turn from the findings of Science in this field to a psychology which is based on the scrutiny of passionate and immediate experience—a very different matter. We find ourselves concerned, in fact, with the conclusions at which man has arrived in the course of his attempts to deal with actual experience as it comes along,

to master the concrete problem, to understand the workings of his own wayward heart, to penetrate into life as it is expressed in an endless succession of changing situations. The only principles which can really illuminate our living experience are those which have been elaborated by superior minds brooding over this bewildering mass of immediate impressions. Such conclusions as they reach are enlightening because they have been elucidated, not as the result of cold curiosity, but because man is obliged to attain to clarity on certain points or relapse into spiritual chaos. It is this impulse behind the activity of the mind which alone ensures its working on these problems in a fruitful sense, which alone endows its conclusions with real value for the world.

The superiority of such principles lies in their interior nature. They represent the organization of a significant type of experience: that which is constituted by the more creative dealings of the individual with himself and the world, and which forms, again, the subject-matter of art. The principles which are arrived at as the result of scientific enquiry are, on the contrary, of relatively inferior importance. They are concerned with qualities which, so far from having been isolated as the result of a passionate and humane attitude to life, have come into existence through a need to handle experience in a convenient manner. The scientific psychologist is dealing with it purely on the level on which it presents itself to the outside observer; he is concerned with nothing much more than a sort of glorified postal sorting.

But all principles, whether scientific, humanistic, or religious, only find their significance in being ultimately applied to a concrete situation. And this circumstance involves, of course, their elaborate qualification. For it necessarily comes about that the individual by whom they have in the end to be taken into consideration is, just in view of the fact that he is face to face with an actual state

of things, presented with a mass of immediate data which far outweigh in significance those points about the object which it possesses in common with other members of a class.* In actual practice this means that what Aunt Cissie or Uncle George, if they are sufficiently generous in their sympathies, will realize about the individual with whom they are called upon to deal, will invariably be far more important than anything which they could learn by studying his behaviour in the light of 'the principles of psychology.' For they are confronted with the immediate presence of a living, breathing individual, whose bearing and appearance can reveal, even to people of average insight, not only his inner condition, but his organic affinities with the rest of the world. To suggest that men can gain more light on the character of a human being by considering him as a member of an abstract class than by watching the play of life in his features and listening to the words which come from his lips, is to indulge in a cynical denial of one of the richest possibilities in life.

This much, however, must be recognized. In the first place, the scientific psychologists, however elementary their discoveries, are at least elaborating a system of notation in terms of which future constataions of a more momentous order can effectively be described. They are creating a frame of reference which will serve to accommodate more significant experience. And in the second place, the findings of Science in this field do seem to prove of value to more obtuse and insensitive types. If a man begins—like the average psychologist—by having practically no native sense of the possibilities which lie in human contacts, his mental horizon cannot fail to be enlarged by the discovery, as the result of scientific research, that people produce more when they are doing

* The point has been dwelt upon with considerable emphasis by F. H. Bradley. See *Ethical Studies* (1927 edition), pp. 110, 152, 157, 225.

congenial work, that a child will learn quickly from one teacher and not from another, or that the most popular boy in a class is not necessarily the most intelligent. For it so happens that by the mere mechanical extension of the scientist's interests in human behaviour, he is automatically brought up against points about people's psychology which, although they are commonplaces to artists or men of the world, he would not normally have observed. We ought, therefore, to bear with his enunciation of his elementary discoveries as patiently as we can. On the other hand, it should be impressed upon everybody—especially upon young people who are enthusiastically taking up the subject at universities—that at the present primitive stage of the science, 'psychology' has practically nothing to do with the tangled immediacies of life. And if a proof of this assertion is required it is afforded, I think, by the fact that on the one hand those great writers to whom we turn for real illumination on the subject have usually been ignorant of academic psychology, while on the other hand, it is possible for a person to obtain first-class honours in the subject at a university on the score of his ability to manipulate its generalizations, although he is almost completely incapable of understanding the make-up of the men and women with whom he is brought into contact in daily life. It is really time that a term was evolved to distinguish that type of interest in men and women which is exhibited by writers like Chekov and Amiel from that which is expressed by the researches of the laboratory psychologist into the workings of their salivary reflex or their powers of olfactory discrimination.

Nor is this all. The fact should be faced that the whole of this cult of scientific psychology expresses to a marked degree an unconscious desire to avoid that inescapable obligation, to which I have already referred, of paying for insight by love. For the essence of the psychologist's creed lies in the belief that the knowledge which we need

to possess in order to perfect human relationships can be discovered without the expenditure of sympathy, without the patient endurance of that association which will alone provide the individual with the facts that really matter, without the exposure of the soul to humiliation or attrition. Instead, it is implicitly suggested, we shall be able to discover all we need to know by being hyper-conscientious in the laboratory. Such a belief is naïve to an extreme degree. It conflicts with the accumulated experience of generations of enlightened men and women; it can only be entertained with any completeness by a person who simply does not understand the nature of life.

A very similar tendency is to be observed in the field of therapeutics. Once again, it is assumed that we can get along very satisfactorily without sacrifice, passion, or suffering. The regeneration of the soul is made a matter of skilful engineering alone. It need hardly be said that for the enlightened therapist the conception of Original Sin is completely out of date. All that is wrong is that certain functions have become wrongly co-ordinated. Man is born free, but is everywhere in (psychological) chains. And the remedy is simply a little manipulation. There is no need for the individual to experience any alarm; nothing is intended in the nature of the old-fashioned 'purification by suffering'; all that is involved is a certain amount of *adjustment*. The principal tenet of this school of thought is, in fact, that, having dispensed with that God whose quickening power used formerly to cause so much embarrassment by moving the sinner to mortification, shame and repentance, we are now able—or, with the progress of 'psychology' shall shortly be able—to obtain the same cathartic results by a sort of 'tuning up' of the psyche. 'By changing the gearing and rearranging the traditional coupling, so to speak, of our faculties,' writes Dr Schiller in his *Tantalus*, 'improve-

ments might conceivably be wrought which would seem to us to border on the miraculous.'

It is in this process that the modern rationalistic thinker—who has long ago lost all confidence in the power of such disciplines as prayer and contemplation—is constrained to put his faith. After all, is it not becoming more and more apparent that 'conscience' is a morbid growth, reducible by analysis to less hypertrophied proportions? That by trying hard to do anything you only defeat your object? That, as a well-known psycho-analyst writes, 'the thoroughly analysed individual ought not to be irritated by anything'—not even by the writings of the analysts themselves? That if you will only accept 'realities' instead of perpetually and wrongheadedly straining away from them you will find that your being will integrate itself?

Needless to say, the attitude is not without a serious basis of justification: the extent and the danger of repression is one of the most valuable discoveries of modern research. Nevertheless, in the face of all this plausible theorizing one's instinctive convictions remain unshaken. Until the end of the world beauty, truth and goodness will only be attained to by man, as they have been in the past, by the path of painful self-discipline and regeneration. It is only the man to whom true spiritual experience is a matter of hearsay who is able to believe that a process of artful tinkering is an adequate substitute for organic growth.

But, as I have said, principles only find their justification when they are applied. In actual life the individual is confronted, not with theories, but with a succession of embarrassing immediacies. And everything depends, not only on his appreciation of the general principles which are involved, but on his ability to perceive how they must be modified in their application to the particular case. Such perception is, and always will be, a matter of *art*. It

is the function of reason to make abstractions from experience and arrive at conclusions which can be related indifferently to a wide range of particular instances. What we are presented with on the plane of actuality, however, is a series of special cases, a tissue of shifting relationships, the warp and woof of which are only to be distinguished by the sensitive and sympathetic observer. And it is at this point—where the problem has lost its abstract character—that the difficulties arise, and the real work begins. Any mechanically minded pedant is capable of juggling with such conceptions as ‘negative self-feeling,’ ‘gregariousness,’ or ‘the constructive instinct.’ But to estimate the degree to which the general principle is shaped and coloured by the immediate issue, to recognize in a given complex the presence of elements so subtle that, although they demand consideration, they can only be sensed rather than described, to appreciate the way in which the situation is continually and insensibly changing in character, to arrive at a solution of the difficulty which shall at the same time involve both a respect for the material facts of the case and co-operation with purposes which are infinitely wider than any which can be clearly defined at the moment at which decision is reached—this is a task which demands the most heightened and refined sense of the ceaseless movement of life.

Certainly man will not be exonerated from this obligation by ‘science.’ Analyse a person as elaborately as you like, the fact remains that he is not so much a permanent phenomenon as a succession of states—that is to say, he is a different individual according to the place he is in, the person in whose company he finds himself, the experiences which he has undergone in the course of the preceding hours. That personality of his to which we so lightly refer is, in reality, nothing more than a convenient abstraction. The entity which we have been driven to construct by the exigencies of thought scarcely

ever comes into play *as such* in any given situation. What we are concerned with in practice are the 'sides' of his nature, his tendencies and proclivities as they are drawn out in turn in infinitely varied ways through his participation in conjunctures which are themselves unique. We see here the complete hopelessness of any attempt to regulate the conduct of life by 'science' in any effective sense. For we only gain an effective grasp of a situation in so far as we treat it as something which has never occurred before. It is by recognizing the degree to which it combines familiar elements in a novel fashion that we arrive at an understanding of its significance. What may be described as the spiritualizing of the life of the world resolves itself into an increasingly complete realization by human beings of the way in which life is presenting them all the time with a sequence of absolutely unprecedented combinations of circumstances. The plane of Science is that of uniformity, unvaried repetition, free interchangeability, the indifference of the generalization to the particulars which it subsumes. The plane of spirit, on the contrary, is that of continuous creation, of perennial novelty, of perpetual adaptation to situations which have never arisen before. Hence our instinctive protest against any treatment of a human problem which involves the element of standardization; we know in our hearts that every contact between living beings is a unique event in the history of the cosmos.

It is important to observe that the identification of the significant elements in an actual complex by a process of direct perception is in no sense a substitute for scientific measurement or mechanical computation. In actuality, it is the exact opposite which is true: that miserably inadequate knowledge of human relationships which we acquire by the painstaking methods of the laboratory represents, rather, the most clumsy conceivable makeshift for the understanding which is derived from direct vision. The

rationalistic thinker would like, if it were only possible, to be in a position to evaluate all spiritual phenomena indirectly by the consideration of evidence which would compel assent from the most commonplace type of mind in its most work-a-day mood. Not only is this a matter of pure impossibility in any juncture of serious moment, but even when the condition is to some degree attainable, all that is achieved is only the most rough-and-ready apprehension of the nature of the subtler issues involved.

For what is actually embodied in concrete actions and happenings constitutes a very much more crude expression of men's inner psychological condition than what they say, how they say it, and how they appear to us in the flesh. It thus comes about that the sensitive individual who sees by looking into a man's face that he is a swindler will gain a far more delicate appreciation of the order of his depravity than any which could be arrived at by the resolutely 'objective' thinker who occupies himself only with what he has actually done—embezzled so many thousand pounds, broken such-and-such a contract, seduced so many women. Witness in this connection the extraordinary difficulties that have to be overcome by any conscientious artist who attempts to convey the quality of his turpitude by the use of words or colours. It is not *what* happened that is truly illuminating, but *how* it happened. The deeper significance of the event lies only in the sense in which its general character is qualified by factors which, by their nature, elude the grasp of the thinker who deals in concrete certainties. Yet sociologists obstinately cling to the conviction that by restricting their attention to the plane of ultimate expression they will one day be able to understand the workings of the human heart. So eager are they, in fact, to place every matter on a thoroughly objective footing that we find them deriving a curious satisfaction from supporting the most platitudinous conclusions by an appeal to the results of re-

search. It is not, perhaps, unreasonable to point out to such earnest seekers after truth that a piece of completely commonplace information remains commonplace even when it is established on the most scientific lines.

But what is more important than all this is that in contemplating spiritual realities in the most direct fashion possible we are apprehending them in the only mode which is really appropriate to our true humanity. In other words, the most natural and effective method by which we can arrive at the true character of human contacts is by becoming familiar with the ways in which the hidden realities are symbolized before our eyes in the appearance, gestures, and speech of men and women. What this process involves is insight in the most precise sense of the term—the nearest approximation which can be attained by an earthly creature to that immediate and complete realization of the truth which we can attribute in a complete form to God alone. But such is the scientific temper of the Age that we are inclined to resist with impatience anything in the nature of the suggestion that the individual is the microcosm of the macrocosm, that there exists a system of correspondences between the natural and the spiritual worlds, that the bodily forms of human beings bear a signature which the man of superior insight can read like a book. The notion, so confidently and unhesitatingly accepted by the mystic and the poet, that the natural means of discerning the presence in men and women of good and evil, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, is that of the direct contemplation of the expression of these qualities in features such as bodily configuration, intonation, or movement, is repellent to our modern highly trained minds. The last thing that occurs to us is that we should attempt to purify our native perceptions. On the contrary, the ranks of the educated are becoming increasingly filled with people who are so completely unresponsive to the profoundly illuminating in-

dications regarding human nature with which they are being presented all the time by their physical senses, that they are only capable of recognizing the existence in a person of intelligence, vitality, or superiority when it has been crudely and inadequately expressed in terms of their reaction times in a laboratory.

Even now, I have left entirely out of account the most subtle and formidable of all the attacks which are being made by Science on the spiritual position—that of the psychologists of the psycho-analytical school. The issues which are raised by their theories are so momentous that I have been obliged to give them separate treatment.

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND REALITY

I

I SHOULD like to make it clear that the criticism of psycho-analytic theory which follows is made from a particular angle and with a particular aim. The naturalistic attitude of mind, which we have found to colour the outlook of so many modern sociologists, is exhibited very fully by the analytical psychologists in all sorts of ways. For my present purpose I have found it most advantageous to consider it in so far as it is embodied in their attempts to formulate the principles on which they conduct their clinical work. This is, I am aware, to attack them somewhat unfairly at their weakest point, for after all they are primarily a body of medical men whose philosophical conceptions are more than anything of a pragmatic character, developed *ad hoc* to meet the problems which arise out of their actual practice. Yet the theology and metaphysics of the psycho-analysts furnish such an illuminating indication of the natural bias of their minds that they cannot be neglected by anybody who is concerned with the 'values' of modern Science.

The whole problem centres, of course, round the notion of 'the normal.' We have seen in the last chapter that this conception only becomes really troublesome to the psychologist when he finds himself obliged to evaluate the experience of the more developed human consciousness, to differentiate, in a word, between the phantastic and the inspired. The analytical psychologists, no less than those of less revolutionary tendencies, are obliged to create a norm to which all experience can be referred. Like all other therapists, they define as 'normal' the individual who has kept his hold on 'reality.' If you face the demands of 'reality' you are healthy; if you are neurotically

seeking for some way of escape from it you are diseased. But at this point the psycho-analysts part company with their orthodox colleagues. For the ordinary psychologist does not go farther than identifying 'reality' with experience which is common to the ordinary run of men and women. If you deny *that*, he says, you must be a sick man. As to more ultimate questions, such as those of God, Immortality, the nature of the spiritual world, he simply leaves them alone; he realizes that it is not his task to pronounce on metaphysical problems, but to deal with concrete evidence. The psycho-analyst, however, comes forward with the bold contention that he can go very much farther than this. What he says in effect is this: 'Owing to the peculiar nature of the analytic technique which I have elaborated, I have been able to arrive at a much more radical conception of the psychologically Real than that with which the ordinary psychiatrist is content to work. For I am in a position to recognize phantasy when it is manifesting in forms which to his eyes appear perfectly innocent; I see all sorts of apparently innocuous mental and emotional tendencies as constituting evasions of the demands of individual and social life, for I am able to identify them as being the expression of repressed fears and wishes in the Unconscious.'

Now this is an extreme claim. For it is, as we shall see, equivalent to dismissing as illusory the greater part of those æsthetic and moral values which cultured and enlightened minds have been engaged in elaborating since man first exercised his mind on spiritual problems. It is to say that æsthetics, theology, philosophy, and metaphysics rest in their existing form on a basis the questionable nature of which was only revealed to the world with the advent of Freud and Jung. Moreover, if this contention proves to be correct we are faced with the prospect of a reorganization of our mental world which is so drastic in character that we recoil from it in dismay. But will it

prove to be correct? Let us consider the nature of the psycho-analysts' criterion of Reality, on which everything, of course, depends.

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In one sense Reality might be defined for the pragmatic purposes of the analyst as: That from which the individual cannot run away without his developing a neurosis. This, however, is not exact, because the psycho-analysts agree that, without being positively a clinical case, you can afford to indulge in a considerable amount of phantastic activity with comparative impunity. We are not all sick men, but it would be good for each and all of us to be analysed. This, however, does not take us very far, so we will turn to the definitions offered by the analysts themselves.

All thinkers of this school, of whatever tendency, agree in reducing the conflicts which take place within the human psyche to a struggle between what are alluded to respectively as the Pleasure-Pain Principle and the Reality Principle. In so far as you are dominated by the first you are a phantast. In so far as you are dominated by the second your activity is 'realistic.'

We will take the Pleasure Principle first. The following description of its function is from the pen of Dr Ernest Jones, one of the most prominent British representatives of the Freudian School. But we are safe, I think, in assuming that it is conceived in very much the same way by analysts of other tendencies:

The 'pleasure principle' represents the primary, original form of mental activity, and is characteristic of the earliest stages of human development, both in the individual and in the race; it is, therefore, typically found in the mental life of the infant and, to a less extent, in that of the savage. Its main attributes are a tendency, on the one hand, to avoid pain and disagreeableness of whatever kind, and, on the other, a never-

ceasing demand for immediate gratification of various desires of a distinctly primitive and lowly order, and all this at literally any cost; it is, in other words, ruled entirely by the hedonic 'pleasure-pain' principle. . . . The principle is thus exquisitely egocentric, selfish, personal, and non-social (which in actual practice often means anti-social). The thought processes corresponding to it proceed by the use of analogies and superficial associations, treat resemblances between different ideas as equivalent to identities, ignore all the laws of logic, and make no distinction between a phantasy and an actual situation in life.

(*Papers on Psycho-analysis*, 1918, p. 3.)

It is evident immediately that the part of a man in which such proclivities have their source is simply what used once to be known as the Old Adam, the natural man, the lower nature and the like. So far we know—or at least think we know—where we are. For the sake of simplicity we will leave out of account Freud's more recent pronouncements regarding 'conflicts and disassociations in the psychic apparatus during the development of the ego towards a more highly co-ordinated organization.' Inborn instincts exist, apparently, the aims of which clash with others. There are obscure compulsions to live through painful experiences again.* We will pass on to the Reality Principle, again turning for definition to Dr Ernest Jones:

The function of the latter (the Reality Principle) is to adapt the organism to the exigencies of reality, to subordinate the imperious demand for immediate gratification, and to replace this by a more distant but more permanently satisfactory one. It is thus influenced by social, ethical, and other external considerations that are ignored by the earlier principle (*i.e.*, the Pleasure Principle). It can, however, only guide and control the pleasure principle, adapting this to the environment; it can never abrogate its activity.

(*Op. cit.*, p. 3.)

* *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1922, p. 5.

In another place he writes as follows :

The repressed impulses . . . meet with the opposition of certain forces of a contrary kind, which emanate partly from without and partly from within. The main source of them is the pressure of education in the widest sense, exerted first by the parents, and later on by the whole cultural environment as well, though no doubt the child is born with a susceptibility to this influence in the form of various predispositions.

(*Essays in Applied Psycho-analysis*, 1923, p. 384.)

I do not propose to analyse all the contradictory notions which are contained in the above two extracts. What I am concerned with here is the meaning which it is intended that we should assign to the ambiguous term 'exigencies of reality.' It is hardly necessary to point out, for instance, that those conditions imposed on us all by the fact of our leading a physical existence—the circumstances that fire burns, that one cannot be in two places at once, that one's body needs food and clothing—are of an entirely different order from those checks on the expansion of the animal self which Dr Jones describes as 'the pressure of education in the widest sense.' For it is obvious that a burglar, while regrettably insensitive as far as the second type of influence goes, might be singularly realistic on the subject of time, place, and material objects. More important, however, is it for us to understand the sense in which the Reality Principle, although it 'can only guide and control the Pleasure Principle' is yet 'influenced by ethical and external considerations.' What I take Dr Jones to mean here is that by a mysterious process of legerdemain a certain part of the Egocentric Ego is at some point changed into a centre which responds to altruistic influences, and that henceforward this part plays a sort of paternal, authoritative rôle in controlling the desires of the remainder of the Ego for incest, murder, arson, and the other nefarious pursuits in which it is so desirous of

indulging either in phantasy or actuality. To this part the psycho-analysts have given the name of the Real Ego. For the purpose of this discussion I need not go into the very curious theories (identification with the parent, etc) which they have evolved in order to explain the process by which this little temple of light comes to be constructed in the midst of such an absolutely infernal region as the Unconscious. I will pass on to a really alarming discovery.

We have so far assumed that psycho-analysis is not doing very much more than state in its own curious terminology the familiar fact that one part of us tries to adapt itself to 'reality'—the conditions of three-dimensional existence, including the obligations incumbent upon us as members of a herd—while the other wishes for nothing more than purely selfish enjoyment. What now astounds us is the news that under the heading of satisfaction of the Pleasure Principle psycho-analysis includes, not only the pursuit of art, but interest in mysticism and religion! We will take religion first and consider the following passages from Dr Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*:

God is our own longing to which we pay divine honours. If it were not known how tremendously significant religion was, this marvellous play with one's self would appear absurd.

Has humanity at all ever broken loose from myths? Every man has eyes and all his senses to perceive that the world is dead, cold, and unending, and he has never yet seen a God, nor brought to life the existence of such from empirical necessity. On the contrary, there was need of a phantastic, indestructible optimism, and one far removed from all sense of reality, in order, for example, to discover in the shameful death of Christ really the highest salvation and redemption of the world.

For the idea of the masculine creative deity is the derivation, analytically and historically psychological, of the 'Father-Imago,' and aims, above all, to replace the discarded infantile

father transference in such a way that for the individual the passing from the narrow circle of the family into the wider circle of human society may be simpler or made easier.

The sources of the dynamic states of religious activity . . . are those impulses which in childhood are withdrawn from incestuous application through the intervention of the incest barrier and which, especially at the time of puberty, as a result of affluxes of libido coming from the still incompletely employed sexuality, are aroused to their own peculiar activity. As is easily understood, that which is valuable in the God-creating idea is not the form but the power, the libido.

(Psychology of the Unconscious.)

Freud, again, writes in his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*:

I believe, in fact, that a great part of the mythological view of the cosmos, which permeates modern religion, is nothing else than psychology projected into the world around us. The obscure recognition of the psychic factors and circumstances of the subconscious is reflected . . . in the construction of a transcendental reality which has to be transformed by science into the psychology of the subconscious. One might almost venture to elucidate in this manner the myths of Paradise and the Fall, God, Good and Evil, Immortality, etc., and to change metaphysics into metapsychology.

What the above extracts embody is a straightforward statement of an attitude which is very much more than merely agnostic in tone. Victorian science, it will be recalled, never got beyond asserting that if such a thing as a First Cause existed, it was by nature unknowable to man. Psycho-analysis, on the contrary, comes forward with the contention that it is in a position to provide us with a psychological explanation of the genesis of all ideas of this type, and to demonstrate their illusory nature.

We may remark at the very outset that such a claim involves an absolutely unjustifiable assumption. In the course of the preceding chapter I observed, in speaking

of Science, that all it can do is to deal with the image on the screen. If this be true, it follows that the efforts of the analytical psychologists to deny the existence of transcendental realities simply because they are apprehended by the human mind under one set of conditions rather than another are inevitably doomed to failure. If such realities exist, the scientist has no means of distinguishing between the experience of contacting them and the experience of illusion. All he can do is to study the circumstances of such experience. Or, to put the matter in another way, it is impossible to describe transcendental reality in terms which would not be equally applicable to the projection of unconscious wishes and desires. In talking about transforming such transcendental reality into the psychology of the subconscious, Freud is exhibiting a complete failure to realize the limitations of scientific knowledge. It is true, of course, that there are to be found other analysts who show a more just appreciation. Silberer, for example, writes as follows:*

Psycho-analysis certainly does show how, in the individual being, this or that inclination to or representation of, metaphysics arises . . . but this is not decisive for the essentials of metaphysical considerations, and still less for a critical-idealistic apperception of facts. If, by means of psycho-analysis, I have elucidated the origin, let us say, of a certain religious idea, I have made a psychological process comprehensible, but have done nothing for the truth of the contents or the value of the idea in question.

But it is the attitude of Freud which is most typical of the psycho-analysts.

And now to consider more closely the issues which are involved. If we seek out the source of the religious man's conception of the world, we find that it lies in certain un-

* Quoted by Pfister, *Some Application of Psycho-analysis*, 1923, p. 176.

analysable feelings entertained by him regarding the nature of ultimate reality. There is impressed upon his mind a profound conviction that the outer configuration of the universe is but the manifestation in time and space of a Reality which he is somehow able to contact directly by a certain kind of introversion. He finds also that in the deepest places of his own being he touches that of Something greater than himself, Something which, by some mystery, both is, and by the fact of its existence gives to the world the only significance which it can ever possess. He has in addition various other intuitions regarding the moral order of the world, his relation to it, the nature of freedom, being and necessity. Psycho-analysis, on the other hand, dismisses such intuitions as fanciful, and asserts in the words of Dr Jung that 'the world is dead, cold, and unending, etc.' So far nothing more is involved than differences of feeling. A has a deep sense that God exists and that life has a spiritual basis. B has a deep sense of the contrary. What is entailed is simply the clash between two different types of consciousness. But, of course, the psycho-analyst does not allow the matter to rest here. He offers to demonstrate on scientific lines that the religious person is deceiving himself. We will now consider his attempt to establish his case.

We may observe in the first place that he pays no attention to that sense of reality which constitutes such an integral part of the experience of contact with the spiritual world. On the contrary, he points complacently to the fact that the world is filled with people who are deluding themselves in the most outrageous ways, but who yet enjoy an unshakable conviction that they are not being deceived. One of the most important tenets of psycho-analysis, in fact, is that you never know where you are. According to these thinkers we are slaves to our impulse to rationalize our experience. Until we have been to Vienna we can never be certain that our loves are not

disguised hates, our ardent desires inversions of deeper tendencies, our altruism nothing but masked selfishness. So extreme appear to be our propensities in this direction that we become suspicious even of our readiness to embrace the truths of psycho-analytic teaching; the defenders of the doctrine have placed themselves in the same position as the advocates of determinism; any assent which we give to their propositions ceases to have significance. The ground has disappeared beneath our feet. We can no longer place any confidence in our most profound feelings of truth and beauty. We are cut off from any immediate apprehension of the nature of reality. The intimations from which the religious man derives his strength and enlightenment and those to which the artist is indebted for his most lofty inspiration are alike robbed of their significance. Instead, we must put our trust in Science.

At this point we must pause for a few moments and consider the attempt of the psycho-analysts to depreciate, by a pretty little piece of metaphysical equivocation, the significance of merely subjective feelings.

They begin by making the point that the realist is the man who sees outside things as they are; the phantast, on the contrary, projects into the outer world what really belongs to the province of the subjective self. Hence the need for strict dispassionateness in dealing with psychological experience. So far all is well. They then go on to appeal to a principle which must, of course, be recognized as being valid by every reflective person: the principle that what we are naïvely inclined to think of as the objective characteristics of things are really qualities which exist for us only in so far as we exist for ourselves. Not only are the space and time in terms of which we think phenomena categories which appear to exist primarily inside our own heads, but it is we also who provide Nature with those qualities in her which move our feelings. It is only to the minds of human beings that

astronomical figures are so impressive; the beauties of the sunset are entirely *our* affair. Dr Jung writes on page 94 of the work to which I have already referred :

Nature is beautiful only by virtue of the longing and love given her by man. The æsthetic attributes emanating from that has influence primarily on the libido, which alone constitutes the beauty of nature.

While Silberer remarks (*Mysticism*, p. 370) :

Conflicts do not, indeed, lie in the external world, but in our emotional disposition towards it; if we change this disposition by an inner development, the external world has a different value for the libido.

From one point of view these statements are sound enough, but they are liable to be extremely misleading, for the reason that it is fatally easy to pass on from this position, as the psycho-analysts indeed do, to concluding that because all our conceptions of beauty and ugliness are necessarily based on subjective feeling, they are, therefore, to be distrusted. It is true, of course, that but for the existence in individuals of what the psycho-analysts call the libido the whole of this system of impressions would collapse. You can suggest, if you wish to be philosophical, that man is a creature who by some mystery contrives to dramatize his innate sense of a hierarchy of emotional qualities by creating an outer world filled with objects in which these qualities appear to inhere. But the fact remains that the impressions which we receive from a world so conceived are all on the same level, all of the same order, whether they refer to physical objects or psychological states; they unite in having the ground of their existence in that of the libido, without which the whole cosmos, scientific facts and all, could not persist for an instant. For on this view of the matter it is the cosmos *as a whole* which is dependent on the psyche in this manner; it is nothing short of unscrupulous to point to this de-

pendence with the object of supporting the contention that our feelings cannot be trusted. When we leave metaphysics aside and consider the world of our daily existence what we find is that, within this metaphysical framework as it were, we are confronted with a world of objects which to different degrees call forth our love and hate. We discover, it is true, that the complexion assumed by many of these objects has been determined by our unconscious projection upon them of our inner moods and conflicts. Yet it is altogether unreasonable to assume—as the psycho-analyst in fact does—that such projection represents nothing but the superimposition of a system of arbitrary values upon a blank, neutral screen. On the contrary, it represents their superimposition upon *an already existing system*—that system which is constituted by the natural hierarchy of the elements of which the world is composed. The universe is filled for us with a variety of objects, objects which differ from one another in respect of the appeal which they make to a healthy, unprejudiced mind. Certain manifestations appear to us inevitably as higher, more beautiful, more significant, more spiritualized than others, and this remains the case to whatever extent it may also be true that the total system which they together comprise is supported by the attention bestowed on it by the psyche. To be free from complexes, repressions, and neuroses is, therefore, not to see the world only as it appears to the eyes of the dispassionate scientist, but also as it appears to the eyes of the passionate poet, to see it as being made up of elements which awaken in us differing emotions according to the function which they exercise in the divine economy.

In a word, the world is only presented to our consciousness in its completeness when, in addition to grouping objects scientifically in respect of their mechanical relationships, we group them also in respect of the appeal which they make to refined sensibility. And to accomplish this

second task we are obliged to educate our perceptions, to render ourselves sensitive to the infinitely varied emotional appeal of the different objects in the world. Only by such discipline are we able to become conscious of those extra-personal, ideal values which give the cosmos its significance. It is our immediate and purified feelings which make us aware of the deeper truth about the world. We apprehend that truth directly. What is pointed to in opposition, on the contrary, as being 'scientifically established fact' is simply that part of our knowledge of reality which can be conveyed by using a certain set of symbols.

What it all comes to is this: Neither art, morality, nor religion have any significance for us unless we postulate the existence of a hierarchy of values which is assumed to exist for the unbiased and sensitive observer. The object of all thought in these fields is that of arriving at the nature of that hierarchy after all allowances have been made for the natural tendency of each observer to look at the problem from a personal point of view. If certain things are not, in the end, more desirable, more satisfying, than others *absolutely*, then life for most of us ceases to have any significance.* This much should be clear. But the psycho-analyst is so beguiled by his discoveries in the realms of psychic aberration that he fails to do justice to the significance of those emotional impressions which are *not* simply the result of 'projection.' Anger for him is, for instance, primarily an expression of some form of psychic maladjustment. He tends to regard all its mani-

* Needless to say, it is an elementary precaution in this connection to begin by distinguishing vertical from horizontal series. It would be preposterous to suggest, for instance, that the vocation of the doctor is 'higher' than that of the artist or the priest. Yet if pity is not a more lofty sentiment than callousness, then the ground, indeed, begins to open beneath our feet.

festations as being on the same level as that misdirected petulance which impels the child to hate the fender on which it has bruised its ankle. Yet it should be obvious enough that anger is in many cases the form assumed by *criticism*: an emotional disturbance accompanying our recognition that certain things—like, for instance, the reasoning of the psycho-analysts themselves—are inherently bad.*

The conclusion is this: The only person who is really qualified to interpret the significance of a person's fear, love, tenderness, or hate is the philosopher who, in addition to understanding, like the psycho-analyst, the mechanism of 'projection' and 'transference,' is also aware of the character of that hierarchy of emotional appeals of which I have spoken above. Otherwise how can he possibly know which emotional reactions are diseased and which constitute a recognition of the inherent qualities in objects? It follows that before we recognize the authority of a person to set a value upon a given emotional manifestation we must have convincing evidence of the fact that he is speaking in this dual capacity of philosopher-psychiatrist. No person who is *merely* a psychiatrist, for example, is justified in disregarding the testimony of the man who, *after* having in the course of a long spiritual pilgrimage learned from the inside the difference between the characters of a wide range of states, asserts that he has gained contact with a deeper level of reality. Who is it but he who is entitled to say: '*This* is disguised self-love; *this* is experience of something real beyond myself; *this* is sexual desire impersonating ecstasy,' and so on? By what other method than this successive experience of different conditions can truth be elucidated?

* It is to be noted that even if in certain cases we learn to control our anger, *the criticism remains*; we now contrive to remain calm in the face of a manifestation which is still seen to be evil in itself.

The analyst, on the contrary, would have it that he is in a position to evaluate such states *from the outside* by studying their structure and exposing the roots from which they have developed. This is to say, he maintains that without leaving that level of experience which is alone accessible to the materialistic type of thinker he can arrive at the significance of what takes place on an infinitely higher plane. The advantages of this method over the laborious one of living one's way through to truth are at once obvious: no conflicts or suffering are involved, no qualifications are needed beyond those of patience and clear-headedness, no education of the finer perceptions is required; the conclusions which are finally arrived at can be assimilated by any person who has a smattering of education.

3

We will now consider the methods which are employed by the analyst to attain his ends. They consist principally in exhibiting the phantastic nature of various so-called higher states by pointing to the lowly nature of their origin. Naturally an important part in this process is played by the idea of sex, for what could be more obvious than that there exists a close parallelism between the symbology of sex on the one hand and that of mysticism on the other, or between the image of the Father and that of God? Yet it is quite another matter when the psychoanalyst asserts that the second set of conceptions are, as it were, nothing but shadows cast by the first. All that has been established is analogy of structure, and in venturing to interpret that analogy in an arbitrary manner the analytical psychologist is again passing beyond the sphere of science into that of metaphysics. Naturalism, manifested here in all its nakedness, is pleased to assert that some of the most lofty notions which we are capable of conceiving are nothing but the reflexes of our animal passions and

desires. Religion, on the other hand, has always contended that there exists a correspondence between the natural and the spiritual worlds, that the macrocosm is imaged in the microcosm, that the highest spiritual states are reflected with great completeness in the form of lower proclivities, that it is exactly the transmutation of the sex nature which produces spiritual vision and power. Whichever theory be correct, it is for the metaphysician and not for the analyst to decide the question.

But apart from these considerations, we may note that there is involved here also the fallacious idea that to exhibit the genesis of an attitude is somehow to 'explain' and dispose of it. It may possibly be perfectly accurate to say that our spiritual feelings are rooted in 'impulses in childhood which are withdrawn from incestuous application.' But surely the whole point is that these same feelings, when they reappear on the religious plane, are different *in kind* from what they were in their earlier forms. It is only the form—all that is available to the materialist—that remains the same. The point is, however, that they are now different in quality; it is in this element of transmutation that the whole significance of the change resides. I would ask the reader to turn again for a moment to the passage regarding human and spiritual love which is quoted on page 87. Is it not simply misleading to apply the same name to the two types of emotion? They may be morphologically and genetically related. But this no more affects the validity of the spiritual experience than the fact that the singing of a great artist can be considered as a refinement of the wailings of a savage. Yet it is just this formal relationship on which the analysts are concentrating their attention all the time. By ignoring qualitative differences which from the philosophical point of view are of the first importance, they are enabled to dislocate the natural connections between emotional phenomena, advance the most

preposterous interpretations of human behaviour, and, in general, distort our whole picture of the workings of the psyche.

What they are perpetually doing is to obscure differences in quality by an indiscriminating use of *names*. In the most insensitive possible manner they affix adjectives to a certain class of emotional manifestations. Then, having begun by calling something by its wrong name, they triumphantly proceed to prove that it should really be described as something else. This is called 'analysis.' But it is analysis of a type which leaves one singularly unimpressed. We remain unmoved on learning that little Frieda's 'love' for her sister is really disguised jealousy—for the simple reason that we should never have dreamed of describing it as 'love' in the first instance.

4

On turning to the psycho-analytic view of Art we find that the question of values again becomes of the greatest importance. Let me quote a few representative passages from the authorities:

The problem of artistic creativeness, its nature and sources, has occupied him (Freud). . . . Explanations are given on the basis of the principles mentioned above (*i.e.*, repression, sublimation, etc.), particularly that of the conscious working out of unconscious wishes of childhood origin that are striving for expression and gratification.

(Dr Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, p. 39.)

Freud himself writes:

Art brings about a reconciliation of the two 'principles' in a remarkable manner. The artist is primarily a man who turns away from reality since he cannot submit to that forgoing of the satisfaction of desire which is demanded by it before everything. He, therefore, satisfies his erotic wishes in phantasy. But he reaches reality again from this phantasy

world in that, thanks to his special gifts, he shapes his phantasies into a new sort of Reality (*Realität*). He thus, in a certain sense, becomes the Hero, King, Creator, Favourite, that it was his ambition to be without being obliged to have recourse to altering the outer world to achieve his ends.

(In *Jahrbuch der Psycho-analyse*, Bd. III., p. 2.)

The artist, then, is regarded by the psycho-analysts as being a person who has given himself up to the gratification of infantile phantasies. He has turned away from Reality and is following the easy path which we all take when the demands of actual life become too much for us. It would be more true to say that the exact opposite is the case. What the artist does is to face realities where the rest of the world is content to satisfy its desire for the comfortable, the easy and the pretty by depicting life as it would like it to be, by doing, in fact, precisely what the psycho-analysts mean when they speak of giving expression to the primitive desires of the Unconscious. So far from doing this, the true artist (it is the spurious artist who panders to the infantile desires both of himself and the mob) is engaged in the most exacting conceivable form of labour. He is doing nothing less than introducing the accuracy and respect to facts characteristic of Science into a region in which there usually prevails nothing but vagueness and glamour. It is he who gives shape to what is normally left shapeless. Hulme has illustrated this point very well by suggesting that ordinary descriptions of phenomena may be regarded as having been made in terms of lines drawn with the help of those ready-made wooden curves which architects employ to enable them to put certain outlines on paper without fatigue. Those of the artist, on the contrary, represent the contours as they really exist in nature. He notes, further—and this is the important point—that in order to overcome the temptation to employ these standardized figures the artist has to keep his mind in a state of constant tension. True vision,

that is to say, is only achieved at the expense of an unremitting expenditure of will power. Could anything be more remote from the disguised self-indulgence of which Freud and the other analysts speak? The artist, so far from being a phantast, is actually fulfilling William James's demand for a 'contemplation of the irreducible and stubborn facts.' And he is doing this in a sphere in which the task is extremely formidable, for the reason that what is here involved is something more than mere intellectual scrupulousness—namely, purity of emotion and intention.

It must not be supposed, however, that the psychoanalysts do not consciously value art very highly. In view of the fact that, according to them, the one aim of education is that of securing the victory of the Reality Principle over the Pleasure Principle, and that the artist is defined as 'primarily a man who turns away from reality,' this circumstance may, perhaps, appear strange. Yet one finds them bestowing the most fulsome praise upon him. Consider, for example, the attitude of Pfister. He begins, of course, by exhibiting the shameful origin of the art impulse:

Artistic or poetic inspiration is to be regarded as the manifestation of repressed desires and, as such, formed in accordance with the laws by which Freud grouped the processes participating in the origin of neurotic symptoms, dreams, hallucinations, and related phenomena, save that an ingenious whole is created, the deeper psychological significance of which, however, is not perfectly clear to the artist.

(Some Applications of Psycho-analysis, p. 131.)

We find him, however, a few pages further on, referring to art as 'a lifeboat in the ocean of death and suffering, an exalted guide, reconciling the solitary soul with its fellows, a liberator of the captive, a healer of the sick,' and Heaven knows what else. How does the psycho-analyst, or, indeed,

anybody else, suppose that the artist is going to accept a recognition of his significance which is qualified in this manner? The driving force behind his activity is a conviction that he is dealing with profound realities, that, however much it may be true that the *form* of his statement is conditioned by personal associations, he is doing something infinitely more than gratify his primitive desires in an oblique manner. If, now, you suggest to him that he is really deceiving himself as to the root impulse behind his creation, but that *with a knowledge of this fact* he must yet go on working, he will probably reply by kicking you downstairs. In other words, you cannot sever his profound conviction of contact with reality from the act of creation which that conviction inspires. The artist knows, by contact with a deeper centre than any which the analyst is capable of touching, that he is dealing with realities. Suggest that he is deceiving himself and you paralyze his activity.

To revert for a moment to the psycho-analytic view of religion, the same utter lack of comprehension of what spiritual experience means from within, as opposed to what it looks like when examined from without, is exhibited in the attitude of the analysts to anything of the order of mystical contemplation. Once again, they propose, as we have seen in the passage quoted from Dr Jung, that the content should be preserved and the form changed. They suggest to the religious type that the object of his feeling is something real simply in that it consists of himself. Yet the essence of the experience lies in a conviction that one is concerned with something *beyond* oneself, with something which has an independent existence of its own. It is precisely in this, in fact, that the experience resides. Hence, nothing could be more futile than to suggest that all that is needed is that the mystic should realize that, as Jung puts it elsewhere, 'God is a mere psychological function of an irrational nature.' For once I learn that all

that I am doing is to indulge in an elaborate kind of play with myself, all my interest in the pastime disappears. I am sustained by the belief that God exists. Prove to me that he is a myth and all my emotion at once evaporates. In other words, however profound the depths which the psycho-analysts credit to the libido, it remains an entity which can never, *when consciously envisaged as such*, awaken emotion of anything like the same order as that aroused by the contemplation of something which is believed to be both other and infinitely greater than oneself. The only way out of the difficulty is to extend the concept of libido until it becomes coextensive with all being. But this is simply to let in God by another door; one is no longer concerned with one's 'self' in any intelligible sense.

So much for theoretical considerations. When we turn to the criticism by psycho-analysts of actual art productions we find once again that they are completely incapable of interpreting any statement of spiritual experience except on the purely formal level—the only one accessible to the naturalistic type. For one does not need more than a slight acquaintance with psycho-analytic literature to see that they leave quality entirely out of account and make no recognition of the fact that a symbol may be read on any one of a number of different levels; they are interested only in form.* Provided that the purely intellectual content of two images is the same, the analyst does not bother any further. I have before me as I write a reproduction of Fra Angelico's painting of the encounter between Christ and the Magdalene. It is a work of great beauty, the product, obviously, of a high type of inspiration. But to describe it from the psycho-analytic point of view is to say that the scene is a garden (you know of course what *a garden* signifies, don't you?); Mary has just emerged from a sort of cavern (you know what? etc.), and is kneeling

* The work of Silberer, already referred to, constitutes an honourable exception to this rule.

down; round his head Christ has a *gold* aureole, etc., etc. The difference between this picture and an illustration from some pornographic work is for the psycho-analyst of practically no consequence. They are both reduced to the level of the purely *diagrammatic*. He deals with symbols. A dog is a dog for him, no matter what the spirit in which it is depicted. *He* knows what it means all right. If, however, we try by ourselves, unaided by the findings of the analysts, to arrive at the difference between the figures of, say, Raphael and those in a cheap oleograph, we find it to reside in the fact that Raphael has somehow contrived to introduce into his work an element of universality. In contemplating it we acquire a sense of some deep, underlying reality in life which we are unable to touch unaided except in our most inspired moments. The effect of it upon us is ennobling. We rise from the level of the petty passions of daily life to a region of ideal values. We establish a momentary contact with something that is permanent and indisputably real.

The whole of the theorizing of the analysts, however, is based on leaving such values out of account, on reducing all images to the level of graphic representations like the illustrations in Larousse. And they treat verbal symbols in the same way. The result is that to most of them a page of Saint Teresa is very much the same thing as an excerpt from the diary of some wretched sex pervert; the artist's profound sense of the correspondence of his deeper experiences with reality is on the same level as the neurotic's conviction that he is constantly being followed along the street; Saint John and Sweeney Todd are subjects for the same kind of treatment. That deeply significant hierarchy which is constituted by differences of quality alone is completely obliterated; all inner experience is reduced to the same dead level. The situation is much the same as with the sociologists; directly such people leave the comfortable level of the concrete they have no interior sense to enable

them to differentiate between the real and the phantastic. Illusion and illumination become indistinguishable; passion and phantasy become one.

5

The analysts, then, would have it that art and religion are largely phantastic activities. We have seen, also, that their attempt to retain the drive behind these impulses while changing the objects to which they are directed must be rejected as futile. What sort of world, we may enquire, now remains for us? It is not difficult to discover, for when the worlds of the artist and the religious thinker have been rejected, nothing is left but that of the man in the street. But this is a fact which one is left to discover for oneself by a process of elimination. For throughout their works the psycho-analysts show themselves to be extraordinarily casual regarding the character of that Reality which they are continually opposing to the region of phantasy. Their pages are filled with endless descriptions of the ways in which the Pleasure Principle is capable of gratifying its desires. But the nature of Reality is simply taken by them for granted. All we can find out about it is that it is neither art nor religion, but something which contrives at the same time to be 'the actual facts' and 'the pressure of education in the widest sense.'

On turning, however, to the actual analyses performed by these psychologists, one has little difficulty in seeing that what they mean by Reality is the world as it is presented to the consciousness of the unimaginative, un-aesthetic, materialistic type of man. It is to this world that the patient is called upon to adapt himself. In almost every case we find that it is he who is measured by it, not it which is measured by him. There is, perhaps, no feature of the psycho-analytic outlook which is responsible for greater confusion than this tacit assumption that it is

always the individual who is maladjusted and never his environment. We are confronted once again, in fact, with the same confusion which we have already examined on an earlier page. For once more the fact is denied that there exists for the healthy consciousness a hierarchy of values.

We are living at the present time in the midst of a civilization which perfectly expresses in the harshness and vulgarity of its customs and institutions the fundamentally materialistic outlook of those who are responsible for its characteristics. Sensitive people react to this ugliness in a particular way—by shrinking unconsciously from those aspects of life which embody more directly the ugly spirit of the time. They may not be fully aware themselves of the mechanism of this process, but it nevertheless exists. But to complicate matters further, there are also to be found in the world large numbers of neurotic individuals who shrink from the sights and sounds of modern life for the reason that they have projected upon the surrounding world their secret hatreds and fears. Now in both cases what appears on the outside is the spectacle of a person recoiling from some apparently innocent manifestation. Yet throughout the writings of the analysts no effective differentiation is made between these two fundamentally different and extremely subtle types of response. It is invariably assumed that it is the individual who is in need of treatment and not society. If I shrink from a certain surgeon, it is not because I have intuitively perceived something ugly in his nature which I cannot yet grasp with my conscious mind, but because I have a complex on the subject of doctors. If I express a dislike of huge departmental stores, this is not because I am overpowered by a sense of the selfishness and the corrupt taste to which they minister, but because there is something wrong with *me*. Freud's impatience with the man who, having objected to his spitting on the stairs, remained unmoved by his contention that in the absence of a spittoon there was nothing

else to be done, affords an excellent illustration of the attitude to which I refer. The confusion comes in part, of course, from the idea which is entertained by the psychoanalysts that the 'thoroughly analysed individual' should be free from such obscure and unpleasant feelings. Yet what are such vague antipathies and sympathies in many cases but the first form of the recognition by the mind of new aspects of truth? The mind can only move from one level of apprehension to another by passing through such periods of indecision and confusion.

6

Such, then, would appear to be the nature of the Reality to which the psychoanalysts are inviting us to adapt ourselves. They think, of course, that they are doing something very different: they are taking their stand upon the irrefragable findings of Science. For Science represents, in their minds, the actual facts of life as seen through a completely detached eye. It is these facts which are opposed to the merely personal impressions of persons like artists and mystics, and which stand out in all their hardness and solidity when the mists of phantasy have ceased to obscure the outlines of the landscape. Take the following passage from Ferenczi:

Philosophies, like religions, are works of art and fiction which . . . belong to another category than Science, by which we mean the sum of those laws which, after thorough elimination, as far as this is possible, of the fantastic products of the pleasure-principle, we are compelled to accept as true.*

He remarks elsewhere that 'the sense of reality attains its zenith in Science, while the illusion of omnipotence here experiences its greatest humiliation.'

What is clearly laid down, then, is the principle that

* Quoted by Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

what remains when phantasy has been expugned is Science. It is this alone which is *real*, this alone to which our attention is directed by the Reality Principle. So what we come to at the end of our long pilgrimage in search of Reality is a straightforward confession of the crudest type of scientific naturalism! In the very face of all the developments which have taken place in the fields of physical and biological science in the course of the century, these thinkers are still clinging to the absolutely discredited notion of nineteenth-century materialism that reality is co-existent with the findings of Science. Actually, as I have already remarked, all that Science can do is to handle those aspects of truth which are symbolized by the use of a certain notation. To convey the nature of other, and more important, aspects of existence we are obliged to have recourse to other symbols—those evolved by religion and art. The opposition which the psycho-analysts have created between phantasy and the findings of Science is as illogical as it is misleading. But what is more important is that it is at the same time a tell-tale indication of the angle from which they are looking at human experience.

A word in conclusion. No sensible person would deny that psycho-analysis represents a most valuable and significant departure in the field of psychological research. Nobody who has studied the works of writers of this school with any care can fail to realize the extent of the service which they have rendered to Science by directing the attention of psychologists to problems *which really matter*. In exploring the field of the Unconscious the analysts, whatever their shortcomings in other directions, are at least dealing with real and living experience. That is why their books are the only treatises on 'psychology' which are of any real interest to people who are concerned with the deeper aspects of experience and not merely with such mechanical questions as the technical process of apper-

ception or the reactions of the body to physical stimuli. The psycho-analyst is looking resolutely and steadfastly into those dark places in the soul into which most of us are afraid to peer. He is concerned with the roots of life.

Further, it is to be noted that psycho-analysis has developed numbers of conceptions which are so suggestive and illuminating in nature that no person who is concerned with the problems of the inner life can afford to dispense with them in his thinking. Such notions as those of sublimation, repression, projection, resistance, the will to power, and the like constitute valuable new weapons in the psychologist's armoury. The fact that one is constrained to use them continually testifies to their relevance to living experience.

Nevertheless, the psycho-analyst's diagnosis of the nature of psychic life serves more than anything to mislead and perplex. For, as we have already seen, through creating an entirely false opposition between Phantasy and Science, instead of a true opposition between Phantasy and Imagination, he is constrained to regard subjective illusion, and concern with those aspects of reality which cannot be conveyed in scientific language, as being on exactly the same level. The consequence is, that while the analysts are doing valuable work in tracing out the ways in which lower impulses attempt to pass themselves off as being of a more elevated order than they really are, they only confuse the issue hopelessly by continually dragging down to the same level other impulses which relate to a higher plane of existence than that on which 'facts' are organized by Science—that plane to which alone they have elected to apply the adjective 'real.' In other words, that which transcends the experience of the more naturalistic type of man is placed on the same level as illusion, and Religion and Art, so far from being regarded as revelations of a deeper reality than that which is accessible to the mind in its work-a-day mode, are considered as being related to the

world of phantasy. A sort of enclave is created in which are contained the findings of common sense and science, and everything which lies beyond it, in whatever direction, is regarded as pertaining to the order of subjective dreaming. To say that what is above Reason has been confounded with what is below it is to state the position in language which, if somewhat loose, is nevertheless suggestive of the nature of the situation which is involved. And until the fact of this confusion is recognized by the practitioners of this dubious art it would seem that the conclusions to which they attain will continue to misrepresent the whole nature of subjective experience.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANATOMY OF INTUITION

I

THE earlier chapters of this book have been devoted to an investigation into the limitations of the scientific method when it is applied to the study of human beings and their relationships. What that investigation has disclosed is that the conclusions arrived at by modern sociologists must be treated with the greatest caution, for the reason that they prove on analysis to be founded on qualitative judgments of a very questionable order.

Up to the present I have left the problem of the nature of qualitative judgments almost entirely aside, making no attempt to give an intelligible account of the data on which they are based, and employing such terms as 'intuition,' 'instinct,' 'vision,' and 'insight' in a purely uncritical sense. Now, however, it is necessary that we should pause for a while and endeavour to understand the position in a more precise fashion. Anything in the nature of an elaborate analysis of the problem of 'values' falls outside the plan of this book; what we are concerned with before everything are practical issues; we are interested in the question only from the point of view of arriving at the basis for a really stable order of society. Yet this does seem to commit us to at least one obligation: that of gaining as clear an understanding as possible of the difference between the objects of scientific knowledge on the one hand and the objects of what I will provisionally term 'non-scientific knowledge' on the other. For our indictment of the sociologist resolves itself precisely into charging him with being insensitive to the significance of those elements in experience which are by their nature least susceptible to treatment on scientific lines.

In one respect at least the distinction between 'scien-

tific' and 'non-scientific' knowledge is straightforward enough. They are differentiated fairly sharply by the fact that, whereas the first can be conveyed by the use of a set of very simple symbols, to communicate the second we are obliged to have recourse to other symbols which are of such a nature that they can only be understood as the result of a refined type of introspection. In other words, this 'non-scientific' knowledge depends for its validity on the mental sensitiveness of the individual to whom it is presented; in certain cases it may actually have no existence for other than the most highly trained sensibility. We are accordingly disposed to describe it as a knowledge of 'values,' and to contrast it with that objective and concrete knowledge which it is the business of Science to amass. Yet the two approaches to experience have many features in common. Both imply observation, the exercise of introspection, the formation of concepts, the elaboration of hypotheses, the use of terms which are universally intelligible.

How, from our particular point of view, can we best deal with this knowledge of 'values'? We must avoid at the outset, I think, anything like proceeding by that barren method of extrinsic definition which is so dear to the academic mind. Our object is to understand the nature of qualitative judgment in its bearing on practical conduct, and we shall therefore derive little advantage from considering it in terms of its participation in various other processes which have been isolated by the mind for a different type of purpose. We must envisage it, that is to say, as far as possible from the inside, taking our stand resolutely upon the foundation of 'my experience as it is for me.' There is nothing very helpful to be gained, for instance, by examining the question in the light of the distinction between the spheres of the 'moral' and the 'aesthetic.' Their relation is obscure, and can receive the most varied interpretation. To some, for example, the fact

that we are led in such a natural manner to differentiate between the beautiful and the good constitutes a powerful argument against the theory of the undivided nature of the soul. To others, of a very different mental temper, the circumstance that we are able to establish such a division at all is an indication of our fall from a more lofty spiritual condition. But here we find ourselves in the realm of pure speculation. And even if we become strictly scientific and examine our actual subjective experience from the point of view of such a distinction, we do not get very far. Such differentiations as that between a 'moral' and an 'æsthetic' impulse are appropriate only to a purely intellectual approach to the problem, and have significance for us only when we are looking at it from the outside. On the level on which we actually exercise our discrimination we are aware only of being compelled to make a choice between those images which are presented to us by our imagination. It is this alone which is the plane of psychological realities. The rest is a matter of classification.*

In the same way, we are not assisted very much by considering such judgments of value in terms of their origin in the psyche. For our present purpose the question is really of little consequence. For whether the intimations which we receive with regard to the goodness and beauty of objects have their ultimate source in the workings of

* The same principle has been insisted upon by F. H. Bradley in a slightly different connection (see *Ethical Studies*, 1927 edition, p. 118). He writes: 'If we are confined to mere quality, the words higher and lower have no meaning. . . . The sphere of mere quality is the world of immediate perception; and here we may say A or we may say B, but we cannot make comparisons between A and B without leaving our sphere. I may take this and not that, I may choose that and not the other, but if, because of this and on the mere strength of this, I call one higher and one lower, I am not simply arbitrary and perhaps wrong in my opinion, but I am talking sheer and absolute nonsense.'

'instinct,' 'intuition,' or 'conscience' respectively, the fact remains that they all in the end appear in the consciousness in the same form. In every case what we have to do with is the flashing of certain images before the inward eye of the individual. Whatever the situation may be at the other end of the wire, the messages which are transmitted along it are recorded by the receiving instrument in the same manner and with the same impartiality. And not only is this so, but it would seem that no acquaintance with speculations regarding their genesis can prove of the least assistance to one who is engaged in evaluating them for the purpose of action. And in any case it is desirable to bear in mind that in considering the images to be found in a man's mind we are dealing with very definite facts, whereas in theorizing about 'instinct' or 'intuition' we are dealing with abstractions.

Rejecting, then, any proposals for treating the data of 'non-scientific' knowledge merely from the outside, we will look at the question instead as it appears from the point of view of the experiencing subject. What, from his standpoint, is the difference between such knowledge and that of Science?

It is to be observed, in the first place, that, however detailed our knowledge of any object may be, it represents only the consequence of selecting certain aspects of it for attention. What we actually experience in its presence is something which inevitably defies all formulation. According to our native predilections, our mental structure, the exigencies of the purpose in hand, we isolate certain points about the manifestation on the basis of which we endeavour to give an account of its nature. Here, I think, we are on the track of the essential distinction between the data of 'intuition' on the one hand and those of science and common sense on the other. Both make abstractions for their own ends. But whereas the scientific mind is interested, above all, in simplifying experience

for the purpose of reducing it to formal order, having always in view such objects as exposition or analysis, intuition by preference treats it from the point of view of its significance in connection with the adaptation of the organism to life.

At this point we may return with considerable advantage to the famous distinction established by Pascal: that between the *esprit de géométrie* and the *esprit de finesse*. The character of their respective functions is sufficiently indicated by the terms in which he has described them. That of the first is typically exhibited by anything in the nature of economic and illuminating generalization, the simplification of a mass of complicated issues, the introduction of system into chaos. That of the second is expressed in the concern of the mind with the more subtle and evasive aspects of a situation, with factors that can be more easily sensed than precisely formulated, with those imponderables which the other type of intelligence is impatient or incapable of taking into account. To identify these two approaches to experience with science and intuition respectively would be a very rash procedure. For it is apparent that both types of mind perform the most valuable services in each of the two spheres of thought. Yet, on the other hand, we must not fail to recognize the fact that the plane of science and common sense is by nature sympathetic to the *esprit de géométrie*—is, in fact, its very creation—while that of art and religion is equally congenial to the *esprit de finesse*. For when it is a question of simplifying our experience of the world, such simplification naturally takes the form of retaining our hold on the data that exist for the mind in its more commonplace modes, and rejecting those that only have reality for it when the attention is strained or the emotional pitch abnormally raised. It accordingly comes about that the most characteristic expression of naturalistic thought takes the form of an insistence on those abstractions from our

knowledge of the universe which are attained by the intelligence when it is in its most 'geometric' mood. Materialism, therefore, resolves itself into an appeal, not to our more brutish experience of the world—a highly complicated affair of smells, colours, textures, and shapes—but to that conception of its nature which we have evolved for the limited purposes of physics. And in exactly the same way the Marxian theorist attempts to reduce the vital factors in economic and social life to those few which present themselves as being of the most importance to the doctrinaire type of intelligence. On the other hand, the artist and the mystic are interested, above all, in those aspects of existence which most obstinately resist exact characterization, in individual and unprecedented situations, in a reality which is continually revealing itself in ever-changing and bewildering forms; they are by nature more conscious of the multiplicity and obscureness of the factors which are involved in a given problem than of the means by which it can be simplified. They are peculiarly sensitive to what might be described as the perils of elimination, to what is left out in ordinary descriptions of phenomena.

2

Such are the objects to which the *esprit fin* would seem most characteristically to direct its attention. We must now consider their nature with a little more care.

We need not pause upon the obvious circumstance that they can be either consciously or unconsciously perceived; this is a matter of no importance to us at the moment. It is of more interest that in either case the description of the phenomenon which is given by the *esprit fin* will be different from that of the normal observer. Further, whereas the latter will be able, to a large extent, to support his conclusions by pointing to the evidence on which they are based, the former will only be able to do so up

to a certain point. In the event of a dispute arising between them regarding the nature of the object perceived, our Pascalian will only be able to justify the character of his vision by an appeal to the evasive additional impressions which he alone has received. It is unlikely, of course, that he will have any very clear realization of the reason for the peculiar character of the picture which he has formed of the object. He will probably merely be conscious of having had certain 'feelings' about it. That is to say, he will intimate with Pascal that 'the heart has reasons of which the reason knows nothing.'

It is to be remarked also that, other things being equal, his description of the object may easily be, not only different from that given by the normal observer, but also more profound. The additional features which he has perceived are more significant of its deeper nature than are those which he apprehends in common with the other person. In fact, even if he fails to notice some of the points about the object which are patent to other people, he may be able, owing to the character of those impressions to which he alone is susceptible, to afford us a far more illuminating picture of its nature. Corresponding to the type of person who can tell you nothing about the man whom he has just met in the street except the colour of his suit or the fact that he was smoking a pipe, there is the other who can recall only the fact that he appeared to be on the verge of committing suicide.

The superiority of the Pascalian over the normal type of observer lies, then, in his ability to conceive the object imaginatively. What does this imply?

It is clear, in the first place, that it does not necessarily entail any transcendence of the level of physical experience. A physicist, for example, may see, in looking at some object, that it possesses certain properties in common with some other substance from which it was previously held to differ completely. He has not left the plane of

physical science, but he has undoubtedly been exercising his imagination. On the other hand, the *esprit de finesse* may be expressed in the recognition of the relation of an object to some other with which it can only be associated by violating, as it were, one of the canons of normal consciousness. This is what happens when a clairvoyant, for instance, announces to us that a ship is destined to sink on a certain date or that our uncle in Belgrade is stricken down with fever.

Now, how is it that, while we have no hesitation in crediting the physicist with imagination in the best sense of the term, we are inclined to refrain from attributing the same quality to the clairvoyant? The answer would seem to be that we instinctively recognize the fact that the individual who happens to be endowed with the faculty of somehow dodging that sequence of past, present, and future which conditions the operation of the normal consciousness is manifesting powers of a relatively lower order. He is in no sense a *seer*; he is merely seeing commonplace events at the wrong time, and he can go on seeing them for the rest of his life without there being involved any expansion of his spiritual consciousness. True imagination, we feel, relates to the perception of the organic affinities of the object; not to an illicit sight of some of its chance relationships. It involves a vision of essentials rather than of external features.

Take, for example, the question of Time. The observer who is endowed with the *esprit de finesse* is conspicuously free from the limitations which it imposes upon the ordinary consciousness. The unsophisticated soul sees men and women as momentary apparitions which possess such-and-such a shape, make such-and-such movements, express such-and-such ideas. By the imaginative person, on the contrary, they are perceived in terms of something more than their transitory condition. He sees their past, crystallized in their bearing, the cast of their features,

their manner of discourse; he has glimpses of what has been surmounted, evaded, rejected, or integrated by the personality. People present themselves to him, not only as individuals, but as terminations of processes as well. In the same fashion he penetrates beneath the surface in another direction to what is potential and unmanifested. He takes no notice of superficial surface equilibrium, but fastens his attention instead on that which is lying dormant in the soul. It is precisely the mark of the *esprit fin* that he is able to discern in the individual the presence of powers and proclivities which are still latent and unexpressed, that he can distinguish true from false promise or feel the presence of corruption or spiritual beauty before they are unfolded to the eyes of the world. Dostoevsky showed a true instinct in *The Brothers Karamazov* in making Father Zossima kneel down apparently inexplicably at the feet of the future sinner, Dmitri. As Lao-tzu remarked, 'to be intelligent is to see things in the germ.'

Again, the imaginative observer is bound to display to a high degree the faculty of *taste*. For, since he is able to gain a vision of the object in its more essential and permanent aspects he is, more than other men, in a position to see what is consonant with, and what inimical to, its deeper purpose. He perceives what belongs to it organically, what in regard to it is eliminable and what integral, what is appropriate to its true growth and what pertains only to fitfulness and transiency. He knows the difference between the integral and the casually combined, between the deep, vital drift and the shallow surface current. All taste resolves itself into this perception of consonance. In art, in social relationships, in all the affairs of life, to be imaginative is to know in anticipation what is appropriate to the particular end in view—even if there is nothing more involved than asking a person the time.

This perception of the relations existing within an object involves inevitably a realization of its affinities with

others. Analysed, the vision of the imaginative observer is seen to resolve itself into an apprehension of the participation of the isolated situation in a more extended scheme. He sees that what presents itself as a closed cycle of events is in reality the operation in a limited field of a wider principle of life.

It is to be observed that the correlations which he thus establishes are on the level of life and not on that of form. Consider, for instance, the difference between the way in which a tree is conceived by a scientist and the way in which it is conceived by an observer of the type that we are discussing. The first envisages it on the plane of physical causation. He examines its chemical and biological relationships. He relates it to other types of vegetable growth on the purely formal level. What the other considers, however, are what may be termed its spiritual affinities. He sees it as expressing forces and tendencies which are manifested in life in myriads of other ways. He has passed from the level of mechanism to the contemplation of that which is mechanically expressed. He is concentrating on the more vital characteristics of the object.

When we say that the scientist is concerned with form we mean that he relates objects to one another on the score of their more mechanical attributes. His skill as an investigator depends largely on his power of selecting units of reference which serve to bring out the more central attributes of the object which he is studying. A child might divide animals according to their colour; the zoologist distinguishes between vertebrates and invertebrates. The aim of all such research is to get down, if possible, to the most radical conceivable method of classification; witness the experiments of the anthropologists in classifying men by skin-colour, hair-colour, and head-form, or a combination of them all. But however expert the scientist, he cannot venture safely beyond the level of

structure; directly the biologist, for example, introduces the conception of purpose into his scheme he is at once presented with the most confusing problems. Yet at the same time, in considering such a quality, he is drawing nearer to the vital centre of the organism, to the springs of its life.

It is just at the point at which Science loses its grip on the experience that imagination, as it is expressed in art and religion, comes forward to take up the tale. What imagination contemplates is just this movement of life within the form. And corresponding to the physical scientist's categories of *form*—crystallization, mechanical action, molecular structure—the spiritual scientist has his own categories of *life*. He has isolated by observation an enormous number of vital processes, processes which he contemplates in their operation in the most diverse objects. Yet multifarious as they are, they can all be resolved into movements of life on the plane of primary causes. What the poet, the artist, the mystic, the man of imagination, is watching all the time is the conflict in a given situation between the twin principles of Life-Beauty-Creation and Death-Ugliness-Decay. He is interested before everything in the movement of life: the varying ways in which it flows, swiftly, sluggishly, tempestuously, pervasively; the types of resistance which it encounters in individuals and situations; the outward psychological signs of its recession, expansion, stagnation; the indications that it is mastering, or being mastered by, the form.

The nature of this vision is by no means apparent at first sight; it is obscured for us by the fact that we perceive this life movement only indirectly, in so far as it is expressed in the forms and relationships of objects. If we concentrate our attention on the *things* of which the artist speaks, we are only misled; it is processes in which he is interested. When he says, for instance, that a certain woman is like a blossoming cherry-tree, he means quite

precisely that they are both momentarily informed with the same type of life. It is important to realize that the variations in the flow of life are just as much a definite object of knowledge as are the purely formal relations between objects which are studied by Science. But whereas the flow of a physical force like electricity can be described exactly in terms of amperes, ohms, and volts, the flow of life is only to be symbolized by the use of poetic imagery.

I do not propose to develop the point further here. The distinction at which we have arrived between concern with the structure of objects and concern with the life with which they are informed appears to me to be sufficiently exact for the not very refined purposes of this enquiry, and I shall not make any attempt here at anything in the way of more precise definition. Obviously it is of such an order that it cannot be maintained with any rigour in every instance. But it does serve, I think, to bring out the difference between two outstanding attitudes to experience. In so far as we are concerned with the more formal aspects of the problem, our interest in it is preponderantly of a 'scientific' order. In so far as we withdraw, by way, say, of chemistry and biology, from the structure of the organism towards its centre, we become more and more involved with an invisible force called 'life.' Finally, we pass in this direction beyond the organism altogether and consider the ways in which the same type of life is manifested in other forms of existence. Beginning with physics, we find ourselves, in the end, in the region of the metaphysical.

3

All this time, however, we have been simplifying the problem by leaving out of account the element of emotion which is so closely involved in the exercise of the intuitive

understanding. This is both an important and an intricate question, and we must deal with it before proceeding further.

Everyone is aware that the scientist and the artist employ very diverse methods to symbolize their experience. Science works by precise statement; art by something which we vaguely refer to as 'suggestion.' Clearly, for instance, it would be absurd to take the statements of a poet on the level of their literal interpretation; what he is doing is to employ information which is often of the most commonplace order for the purpose of conveying to us something else which exists on an altogether different spiritual level. The result of such presentation is the awakening in us of what used once to be known as the 'æsthetic emotion.' This emotion is inspired in us because the statement is made in a certain way. The question now arises: Can the artist be said to be imparting knowledge to us in any precise sense?

Those who are inclined to answer this question in the negative take the view that the sole function of Art is that of exhibiting to us differences in quality; it tells us nothing directly, but only causes us to vibrate, as it were, in a particular way. This, as I understand the matter, is the view which is taken by Dr Streeter in his *Reality* (1926). In this work he is concerned with maintaining the thesis that quality and quantity are two complementary and equally significant aspects of Reality, and he would assign quantity to the province of Science, and quality to the provinces of Art and Religion. Art, as he conceives it, is therefore a sort of organization of our emotional reactions to life. 'A work of art is the embodiment of a feeling, a mood, a point of view not purely ethical or intellectual . . . an externalization, in one or other of its aspects, of the inner quality of life'—'The artist is not trying to communicate facts or theories, but to elicit an appreciative spiritual response'—'With know-

ledge in the scientific sense Art has nothing to do whatever'—'Every work of art is the outward objectification of an invisible spirit,' etc. (pp. 32-35).

Dr Streeter is a Christian apologist, and it is in connection with a defence of the theory of spiritual values that he makes the above observations on Art. But the same fact of the predominatingly affective function of Art can be utilized for very different purposes in the hands of the rationalist. Consider, for instance, the attitude of Mr I. A. Richards in his *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1925). Mr Richards is a literary critic who is laudably anxious to introduce a more rigorous spirit into the discussion of æsthetic problems, and who is himself doing valuable work in this direction. His attitude to Art, however, is, to my mind, vitiated by the nature of the assumptions which lie at the basis of his theory, which, in regard to the subject we are discussing, can briefly be described as follows:

It is imperative to distinguish sharply between two uses of language, the scientific and the 'emotive.' Scientific language is devoted to symbolizing the facts of experience in terms which are as unequivocal as possible; 'emotive' language is devoted to symbolizing the conditions which serve to engender certain states of mind. Such states of mind will, of course, vary in respect of their desirability from the point of view of the health of the organism. Good art, for instance, has the effect of throwing the psyche into a state of adjustment with itself which is both harmonious and satisfying; bad art has the opposite effect. But in either case all that is involved is a modification of the psychic equilibrium.

'Experience,' says Mr Richards in another work, 'is its own justification.' Such is the way in which the situation is regarded by the person who is capable of realizing the significance of such states as ecstasy, inspiration, and rapture in terms of neural adjustment. Unfortunately,

Mr Richards continues, Men of Letters and others who have not investigated the physical basis of emotion are peculiarly prone to assume that, because they experience a profound satisfaction in certain states of mind, it follows that such satisfaction is an indication that they have established contact with some deep aspect of Reality. In actuality, according to this critic, they have only been thrown into one or other of a number of nicely balanced 'attitudes.' If they would only realize this fact, there would be an end to all this talk about Truth and Beauty being one, and all the rest of it. 'Emotive' language would be understood for what it is, and the provinces of Poetry and Science would no longer be confounded.

The point of view which is here put forward exhibits, of course, the characteristically naturalistic tendency to 'reduce' experience down to its lowest terms. With the more philosophical objections to it we are not concerned here. It will be sufficient to recall two points which have been made elsewhere in the course of this essay: In the first place, any conception of Reality which is arrived at immediately by refined perception has just as much right to be considered valid as one which has been reached by having recourse to a largely theoretical system of psychophysical correspondences; and, in the second place, no explanation of psychological experience that is made in terms of pure mechanism has any claim to be regarded as ultimate, for if there is such a Reality as that with which the artist and the mystic feel themselves at times to be in contact, it is difficult to conceive of the neural arrangements by which that contact is established as being different from those which Mr Richards describes.

Let me return, however, to the question at issue. What I would suggest is that both Dr Streeter and Mr Richards have, in their different fashions, overstressed the significance of the emotional element in our response to artistic statement. Our experience of the world is an experience

of relationships. Further, it so happens that our contemplation of certain types of them is accompanied by emotion. There are some relationships at the lower end of the scale which, although they are more than accidental, are of such a nature that they leave us emotionally cold. Such are: the percentage of illiterates in Czechoslovakia; the effect of unemployment on the size of families; the fact that the Pre-Cambrian group of rocks consists of fundamental gneiss; the fact that diphtheria is caused by the Klebs-Löffler bacillus. Others, on the contrary, are capable of moving us deeply, such as, for instance, our relationship to God.

It is not difficult to see the reason for these variations in 'affect.' We become more perturbed in so far as in our consideration of relationships we recede from the periphery of existence with its overpowering multiplicity of 'things' and draw nearer to the contemplation of the vital, creative forces by which it is informed. In this sense biology is more exciting than chemistry, and anthropology than zoology. Finally, in the highest moments of our spiritual life we are able to conceive of types of relationships which are of such an order that not even by the exercise of the will can we resist being emotionally swept away on gaining a glimpse of them. Thought and feeling here become one; to see is to adore.

But this distinction between relationships and the emotions which they awaken in us is one which emerges only after analysis. Our immediate experience—as, for example, when listening to a Beethoven symphony—is one of 'affect.' It is only on reflection that it occurs to us that our feelings must necessarily have been aroused as the result of our having contemplated certain facts; that, however strange the notation which Beethoven may have employed for the purpose, he has been making some sort of statement to us. The difficulty of identifying this cognitional element in our experience is increased by the fact,

to which I have already alluded, that the artist will use some quite ordinary statement with the object of communicating to us something of much greater importance. But that something is communicated all the same, however difficult it may be for us to describe it for ourselves by employing other symbols.

A similar type of misapprehension to that noted above is, I think, observable in the minds of those critics who are anxious to isolate an emotional mode of apprehending truth under the name of 'intuition.' If we are at all imaginative the idea of the existence of such a faculty cannot but prove sympathetic to our minds; it is only with a great deal of difficulty that we can be brought to accept the suggestion that certain types of knowledge are not ineffable, or that an appreciation of, say, the transcendental nature of God has anything in common with that process by which we arrive at the conclusion that the gas meter needs another shilling in the slot. Yet it is really very difficult to understand how the principles of cognition which are involved in our workaday constataions can fail to be involved also in our lofty spiritual realizations. After all, why should a difference in emotional response imply a difference as well in the initial process of perception?

There is, however, this much to be said. In so far as we acquire a more and more central conception of the nature of an object, we apprehend it in an increasingly rapid, exciting and satisfying manner, and are inclined, of course, to be correspondingly more emotionally moved in the process. The discursive intelligence violates the completeness of the object, dissolving it for the purposes of analysis into more or less of a *poussière algébrique*. Intellect in its purest form, on the contrary, penetrates direct to its quiddity, and thereby dispenses with that laborious circulation round it which is the method of *intellectus agens*. The 'intuition' of M. Bergson, for example, is the faculty by

which the mind seizes the essential nature of the object directly without breaking it up into its different aspects.

This notion of a vision of reality which is more immediate and illuminating than that which is attained by the ordinary process of analytical reasoning is, I think, acceptable enough. It is clear that, as our thought becomes more profound, the conception which we gain of an object increases in its centrality. As our perspicacity develops, our understanding constantly approximates more and more to the immediate realization of the thing in all its completeness. Nevertheless, such approximation is inevitably never complete. It is not a fact of human experience, but a purely ideal conception which should therefore be reserved for that complete vision of reality which, according to Scholastic Philosophy, is the privilege of God alone. In so far as we achieve something of this pure vision, objects become transparent to our view; we look at them through the eyes of angels.* But not even Mr D. H. Lawrence in his most plexial of moments ever attains to it with any completeness. The notion of intuition in this sense is valuable, since it represents the extreme term of a series the other end of which is constituted by pure analysis. But, as I have remarked, it defines an ideal. What is referred to by those people who talk lyrically of apprehending the object in its totality, piercing to its core by a process of Bergsonian imagination and the like, is really a vision of it in terms of concepts which are of a more fundamental nature than those of ordinary thought. But this is not to say that they have altogether transcended the normal process of apprehension.

* Cf. Raphael, in speaking of the soul in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. V., p. 486:

‘Reason is her being,
Discursive or intuitive: discourse
Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours.’

4

Imagination, then, still deals in relationships. But they are relationships of a very special order, being concerned, more than anything else, with the forms assumed by that flow of life to which I have previously referred. It is on this account that Art, which is occupied precisely with the contemplation of this movement in all its multitudinous forms, is so valuable from the point of view of practical psychology.

What it does is to give enduring form to types of subjective experience which are of so subtle an order that they can only be retained by the mind with the greatest difficulty without such an aid. The process of interpreting spiritual experience is so delicate that it is not even possible to visualize the data on which the intelligence is working without the assistance of the artist. We are confronted, in fact, with a situation comparable to that which would arise in the field of chemistry were such substances as sulphur, magnesium, and chlorine only perceptible for short periods to very sensitive apprehension and were they also to possess properties which were indescribable in other than imaginative language. It is the peculiar function of Art to present such objects to our minds and to exhibit to us the relations subsisting between them. Such vision is only to be achieved at the cost of extreme difficulty. It is no exaggeration to say that it is only on very rare occasions that ordinary people can be made to regard even such an apparently simple object as an apple from this organic point of view. Hence their astonishment at seeing the way in which a chair has presented itself to the mind of a Van Gogh. This may serve, by the way, to throw light on some of the problems of symbolism. When we read in certain sacred books that creatures like the horse or the cow are symbols of cosmic

processes, it is desirable for us to bear in mind that the statement refers to the horse or cow which has been *realized*. And that realization is the privilege of exceptional consciousness. The horse, in the sense in which it is conceived by the scientist, is a symbol of nothing whatever.

Of course, we are not completely dependent upon the artist for this realization of the nature of our experience. Nature, for instance, offers us assistance by enabling us, as Coleridge has pointed out, to associate our most intangible and fleeting impressions with permanent, concrete objects—a tremendous privilege. And even apart from Nature and Art we can learn by painful practice to evoke these states for ourselves. But the operation is one of extreme delicacy and can only be performed effectively by the specialist. If we bear this fact in mind we shall be less likely to be impressed with the efforts of the scientific psychologist to dispense with it and offer us instead the fruits of uncultivated perception disguised as the products of detached observation.

5

So much for the general nature of the data of intuitive understanding. We have seen that they consist in a certain type of relationships, which are none the less real because our emotions are closely involved in their perception. What we have now to do is to examine the subjective mechanism by which such perception is accomplished. In a word, we must do our best to discover how intuition 'works.'

Nobody, I suppose, will deny that the so-called 'intuitive' type of person really exists. Almost all of us are acquainted with someone or other who is continually surprising us by the exercise of a mysterious faculty for understanding characters and situations with a directness which seems to imply a transcending of the ordinary pro-

cess of deduction from observation. But we are perfectly well aware that he must be observing *something*; the question is only, What?

One of the most obvious features of our mental experience is the way in which vague apprehension is always tending to run ahead of clear realization. We are all the time aware of more than we can formulate. We are continually conscious of vaguely conceived issues which, if not precisely 'involved' in the problem we are discussing, are at least sufficiently germane to it to exercise a sort of gravitational pull upon the progression of our reasoning. Around that bright region of our consciousness in which experience is ordered and clarified, in which events are subordinated to principles, impressions correlated and analysed, there lies a penumbra of obscure premonitions, half-born surmises, inchoate perceptions, intermittently sensed dependencies, and interactions. As our mental life develops we progressively consolidate this precariously held territory and bring it into relation with the remainder of our experience. Yet through this very consolidation we have inevitably become aware of a hinterland still farther away.

Nothing is more difficult than to characterize effectively the way in which the existence of this crepuscular region presents itself to consciousness. I think, however, that it is pretty safe to say that what the mind first discerns in extending its attention to a new field of experience is a collection of formal resemblances. It is not isolated facts on which our attention fastens in such moments, but such features as familiar outlines, analogies of structure, similarities with already identified types of trajectory, modes of crystallization, distributions of emphasis, classes of rhythm. In a word, our first effective grip of a new mental situation takes the form of a recognition that it is *on the same plan* as one which we have already observed. We are put on the scent of a fallacious argument by a

vague feeling that we have seen that particular type of progression before; we are led to recognizing the weakness of a personality by an initial tendency to connect it with the instability of Moorish architecture; we begin by becoming aware of the *process* which is involved.

When this process of exploration takes place in the field of human experience rather than in that of, say, geology or astronomy, the patterns which are thus identified relate naturally enough to the forms assumed by that life-movement of which I have already said so much. On the psychological level, to be intuitive is thus to have an unusually acute consciousness of life-patterns, to observe directly the mode and quality of the life which shows itself in a given situation. In terms of subjective experience, the recognition of such patterns takes the form of seeing various images in connection with the object. Such images vary, of course, in intensity. If a person has a powerful visual imagination, they may be very vivid indeed. But *something* enters the mind of even the most abstract type of thinker as an indication that he has become conscious of another object in association with the one which he is considering. Now, the function of such images is to call the attention of the person to the nature of the life-process in the individual, thing, or situation with which he is occupied. There appears before his mind the image of an object which embodies the same form of life. In fine, such imagery exercises the same rôle in life as it does in poetry: it serves to indicate to the observer the type of life-movement involved. The person 'of more than ordinary organic sensibility' is conscious of these vital affinities of the object, and is thus able to evaluate it with apparently inexplicable rapidity; he feels directly the quality of the life with which it is informed, shrinks instinctively from a certain type of nature as from a reptile, and thinks of another as exhaling the peace of an autumn day.

It will thus be seen that the intuitive type of individual relies primarily on his emotions. He does not perceive mentally that two different situations are designed on the same plan; he relates them rather because they inspire him with the same type of feeling. He does not say to himself: 'There is the same principle (of corruption, redemption, fixation, frustration) working both in A and in B.' He says, on the contrary: 'A gives me the same feelings as B.' The person of the 'purely instinctive' type regulates his life very effectively by means of this sensitiveness to emotional impressions. If the quality of the emotion with which an object inspires him is of a certain order, he shuns or entertains it without further question. One who combines this sensitiveness with a capacity for analysis is not, of course, content to deal with his experience by using this simplified technique. He disengages the patterns which thus awaken his feelings, and thus knows, not only that he is feeling, but what he is feeling about. Finally, when to this power of identifying patterns there is added a scientific desire to obtain concrete evidence, the person looks to the facts to confirm the presence of the pattern.

6

It will be apparent that what I understand by intuition is the exercise of the perceptions of the artist in the sphere of human relationships. Both the artist and the intuitive person are sensitive to the affinities of individuals and objects on the plane of the inner life. The expression of this sensitiveness in the case of the artist is the creation of beauty; in the case of the intuitive person it is the discerning conduct of his own life and enlightened social criticism. On the first of these points more will have to be said at a later juncture. As to the second, I would explain that I regard such criticism as 'enlightened,' for the reason that it penetrates immediately to those potent

and hidden forces in social relationships which are only dealt with by scientific sociology at the stage when they have been expressed in outer 'conditions.'

This, however, is not all. It is not simply the case that intuition, by leaping directly to the informing life, merely discovers in anticipation what Science will ultimately arrive at later by its more laborious methods. The situation is rather that it is only intuition which can direct the mind to research in a profitable direction. Both in the sphere of individual and of social life, what is apparent to the intuitive eye is the organic structure of life, the ways in which the creative and significant forces are flowing beneath the surface. That surface is the creation of acquisitiveness, conventionality, fear, and blind adherence to tradition. It is a level on which people are separated or banded together, not according to their spiritual affinities, but as the result of mechanical necessity. It is a level on which association is determined by economic needs, by class loyalties, by social custom, and by geographical accident. The function of the intuitive man—the artist in life—is to identify and emphasize the living, fruitful relationships which lie smothered beneath this mechanical system. The man with fine instincts is always endeavouring to break through to this deeper level in his own life. He is therefore considered by the orthodox to be a revolutionary. Yet his revolutionism consists simply in his endeavour to orientate his life by realities rather than by dead rules. On the other hand, the unimaginative type of sociologist hardly suspects the existence of this vital stratum, and spends his time in trying to fit the bits of life together on the outside. More accurately, he is not dealing with life, but with the forms assumed by its negation.

PHANTASY AND IMAGINATION

I

IN the last chapter we pursued our enquiry to the point of conceiving of the intuition as that mode of consciousness in which the mind is aware of the forms assumed by the movement of life. Before proceeding further we must consider the function which it exercises in the personal life of the individual.

I have already indicated the important part which is played by emotion in the intuitive process: the individual evaluates the phenomenon with which he is confronted by attending to the emotion with which it inspires him. Obviously the development of this technique implies the cultivation of introspection to a high degree. The person is exercising something like the function of a tea-taster in the sphere of psychological experience. The same thing is done by the art critic, though in a more limited field. Here a small point.

The term 'introspection' has certain unfortunate associations, particularly when it is applied to the examination of the feelings which have been aroused in one by the experiences of workaday life. In such a connection it is often regarded by the more robust minded as being somewhat 'morbid': are not the perils of excessive introversion evident enough? Part of this dislike of introspection comes, I think, from a confusion between its nature and the purposes to which it is usually put. For very comprehensible reasons it so happens that most people who are given to examining the contents of their own consciousness do so in connection with their hopes and fears regarding their personal fate and condition. Introspection thus comes to be synonymous in the experience of many with selfish calculation, and is therefore thought to be

pernicious. Yet the artist is introspecting all day long perfectly safely, for he is examining his feelings for the purpose of evaluating an external object in relation to a number of others. And the person is equally safe who does the same thing in the interests of discovering the most appropriate direction in which he can pass beyond his limited, personal life.

To pass on, however. We are concerned in this chapter with the exercise of the intuition in a particular field—that of the adaptation of the self to its environment. What we have to examine is the nature of the possibilities which lie before the individual in the way of using his feelings as a guide to conduct.

It is worth while pointing out, perhaps, that, regarded from the subjective angle, his will is seen to be perfectly free. The fact that, considered from an entirely different point of view, it may be regarded as determined is completely beside the point. Even if it could somehow be proved to us that inner choice is in reality 'epiphenomenal,' 'a functionless shadow,' and all the rest of it, the fact remains that to live rightly we are obliged to behave as though the exact opposite were true.* To step outside one's self and regard the situation from the point of view

* We are driven on purely intellectual grounds to postulate the existence of the principle of determinism; the only disputable question is the extent of its operation. Yet it is evident enough that human intercourse is, in practice, based on a complete acceptance of the opposite notion: the notion that free-will is a reality. To take a simple example: If, having been picked up on the road unconscious by some good Samaritan and thereafter tended by him for several days in his own house, I decline—on the assumption that his behaviour was determined by strict necessity, as would mine also be in thanking him—to express the slightest appreciation of his so-called 'voluntary' action, I am then playing the philosopher in a manner which most people—and, in particular, my rescuer—would regard as intolerable.

of, say, a statistician, to look with misplaced impersonality at what must only be considered with extreme partiality, is simply to commit spiritual suicide. Dr Johnson summed up the position once and for all when he said that although reason is against free will, all experience is in favour of it. We are impelled, however automatically, to make continual, deliberate decisions.

Such decisions are necessarily arrived at as the result of the scrutiny of certain purely personal impressions which are for the most part of an unverifiable nature. They are accordingly suspect to the rationalistic type of thinker whose bias is such that he prefers to take his stand on concrete evidence. Deeply sceptical of this 'subjective' method of dealing with the problem of life, he is always ready to emphasize the untrustworthiness of any conclusions which are arrived at by the dubious path of 'feeling' rather than as a result of the examination of objective facts.

It would be foolish to deny that, up to a point, his distrust is thoroughly justified. The unreliability of the 'feelings' is an indisputable fact. The only question is: What course of action are we to adopt as a result? The scientist plays for safety by attempting to evaluate subjective impressions indirectly. In our experience certain feelings of conviction regarding the truth or beauty of a situation are associated with particular types of bodily conditions: our hearts beat faster when we are excited; the rhythm of our thinking is reflected in that of our breathing. The man of the intuitive type takes his stand upon his ability to distinguish these feelings from one another by a process of direct discrimination. This amounts, as we have seen, to differentiating between numbers of delicate images which are presented to his consciousness. Further, for conveying to others the difference between them he relies upon the use of those symbols which have been evolved by religion and art. The man of science, on the

contrary, is anxious, in so far as he enjoys the same experiences, to evaluate them indirectly—this for the very good reason that while more exalted states of mind can be identified directly only with great difficulty, any physical conditions which chance to accompany them can be recognized with a far smaller possibility of error. The ideal state of things for such an observer would be that in which all unselfish people, for instance, happened to be over five feet eight inches in height, and all selfish people below that figure. Life is not like that. Nevertheless, the conscientious scientist endeavours to establish as many correlations of this type as possible. The value of such as he arrives at is often small, for reasons which have been discussed elsewhere; but this does not affect the validity of the principle involved. There is probably in existence a fairly complete system of psycho-physical correspondences; even the most delicate mental and emotional reactions must be mirrored *somewhere* in the form of bodily changes. But as we have already seen, it is only the most simple psychic states that can at present be correlated with physical conditions.

It is a different matter, however, when the scientists proceed to challenge the validity of certain subjective feelings on the score of the nature of the neural symptoms which are alleged to accompany them. For example: The outward signs of mystic ecstasy resemble those of alcoholic intoxication, therefore we need not attach much importance to it. Nothing could be more hazardous than such a method of evaluating experience. In all such disputes the fact should be borne in mind that the testimony of direct introspection has the right, however misleading such introspection may prove to be on occasion, to be taken just as seriously as that which is indirect and based on a precarious system of psycho-physical correspondences. In the sphere of science no less than in that of politics, justice, or administration, the evidence of the man who was inside

the signal box at the time of the accident must be given precedence to that of the person who saw what he was doing through the window—and especially in this case where what is involved is not a window but a complicated series of mirrors. And even the proof that the signalman was drunk involves recourse to the same oblique process of verification.

No sane person, of course, would deny that personal impressions other than those of the simple type on which the conclusions of science are based are extremely unreliable. Nevertheless, there is no other choice before us but that of evaluating them as accurately as we can. Life will not wait for Science. Nothing could be more admirable than the rationalistic ideal of taking action only in accordance with an adequate amount of concrete evidence. Unfortunately, however, every man and woman in the world is being compelled all day long to make decisions which are based upon data of the most elusive possible type. It is not such a terribly difficult matter to pay due regard to the actual facts of the case when it is a question of buying a house or choosing a new piano. With those problems, on the contrary, which arise in connection with the more intimate personal life, the position is altogether different. What is now involved is a series of delicate estimates relating more than anything to contacts between individuals. The sensitive person is obliged all the time to make judgments regarding his own and other people's motives, character, and inclinations, judgments which rest upon nothing else but those 'personal impressions' with which the scientist is so chary of dealing. And such judgments are not only usually irrevocable, but they have often to be made instantaneously, without reference to anything but the person's native sense of truth or fitness. It is true that among the factors which are thus taken into account there may occasionally be included certain facts and principles which have been established by Science. But owing

to their highly abstract nature they tend to have little bearing on the practical problems of the inner life.

With the spiritual development of the individual this matter of personal judgment becomes of even greater importance. For he acquires a more and more vivid realization of those relationships between people and things which are more 'sensed' than clearly apprehended. He is impelled to pay greater and greater attention to those aspects of experience which are least susceptible to scientific investigation. He finds that, for no reason which is comprehensible at the time, certain personalities, certain passages of literature, certain statements made by people like mystics, stir something in the deepest part of his being. They impress him as relating to a more profound level of reality than that of which he has hitherto been conscious. And this realization involves inevitably the obligation to some kind of action. The man must *do* something as a result. He cannot afford to wait until Science has one day evaluated these manifestations by indirect means. He knows that if he does not follow his intuitions he is perjuring his soul. It is only the man who has never been tormented by the beauty and mystery of life who can talk complacently about maintaining a suspended judgment on such problems. Not only are they urgent, but the truth about them can only be discovered by a process of passionate living. It is easy enough, for instance, for the scientist to throw out the suggestion that 'conscience' is a mere reflex of custom. Nothing could be more obvious than the fact that when we are confronted with a moral dilemma our impulse to conform to custom in dealing with it expresses itself, just like the impulse to take some more painful action which, nevertheless, makes for creativeness, in the form of a 'still, small voice.' But for light on the subject of which voice is which, we turn, naturally, if we have any sense, to the person who, at the cost of patience and self-discipline, has cultivated the

ability to discriminate between them—not to the person who has resolutely closed his mind to both classes of prompting.

The situation is the same when the rationalistic type of thinker lays emphasis upon such facts as that religion has its roots in the animistic or pre-animistic beliefs of savages, or that people's ideas of what is fitting and desirable vary from century to century and from latitude to latitude. Of course such facts must be recognized. But what is one expected to conclude from them? All that is to be legitimately deduced, I think, is that the task of arriving at those values which are most consonant with the deeper nature of man is one of extreme difficulty. Many of the people who dwell in this manner upon the relativity of truth and beauty appear, however, to be suggesting by implication that the search for universal principles is an idle proceeding. Such a contention is difficult to sustain, since, if all feelings about truth are purely personal affairs, any assent which a person gives to the proposition that such is the case ceases to have any significance. But in any case, without going into the question of the metaphysical basis of the concept of values, it is a simple fact of experience that we are impelled to behave as if they were absolute. What is the object of all literary, ethical, and philosophical criticism but that of arriving by a process of elimination at those principles which will win the acceptance of the best minds? And not merely the best minds of Bloomsbury or Budapest, but the best minds of the world? Everybody knows that certain savages adorn their bodies with disgusting substances, keep young girls in cages until the age of puberty, only visit their wives at night, and even on occasion eat one another's bodies. But what on earth is to be gained by sitting down in the face of such facts and reflecting that after all it's only a question of taste? The point is, that we are driven as rational beings to selecting out of all the possible vagaries of fashion and

belief those which will prove in the end to be the most satisfying to refined perception. We do not treat the work of Cézanne with indifference because he is not fully appreciated in the East End, or dismiss Keats because certain people prefer Ella Wheeler Wilcox. And even if the great mass of humanity comes—as seems at the present juncture to be possible—to lose interest in superior values altogether and jazz its way back to the apes from which it has evolved, this fact will not in the least affect the significance of Beethoven's music. It is the peaks of human experience which are significant for us, not the valleys.

2

We are committed, then, to doing our best to arrive at permanent and universal values. The process may be described in negative terms as the emancipation of the human spirit from the realm of phantasy.

But how, again, are we to conceive of phantasy? We have already seen that, properly understood, it should be regarded as being opposed not simply to the findings of Science, but to the correct exercise of the imagination. What does this process imply?

The observation of internal states is clearly a matter of extreme difficulty. Even on the plane of physical science it is extraordinarily hard to get hold of a really reliable observer. Whether a man is studying earth worms or spiral nebulae, he has to overcome a formidable resistance to bring himself to the point of noticing what is in front of him, or of refraining from seeing what he would like to be there. Even the most sturdily individual object can serve at times as a passive screen on which we project out of ourselves all sorts of distorting conceptions. Not only the botanizing schoolboy, but the Astronomer Royal himself, has to be on his guard against this insidious anthropocentricity. Nevertheless, Science succeeds somehow in the

end in constructing a world common to all observers, in lifting the great mass of physical phenomena above the level of the unreliably subjective.

What, however, is the nature of the parallel situation which arises when it is a question of achieving the same impersonal vision on the plane of inner, rather than of outer, experience? What is the equivalent in the region of poetry to accurate observation in the field of physics? Is there, we may ask, any criterion by which we can differentiate in this sphere between a purely personal impression and a judgment of universal validity? Consider, for example, the three following observations: 'This piece of stone is white,' 'Buses are pleasanter to ride on than trams,' and 'The wages of sin is death.' All of these remarks are pure expressions of opinion. But the assumptions which they imply are of a very different order. The first is what is called an objective statement. This simply means that it is verifiable by means accessible to all. If it is erroneous it can be disproved by an appeal to the judgment of the charwoman who happens to be cleaning out the room. The endeavour of Science, as we have seen, is to reduce all knowledge to the level on which it is within the reach of everybody who is in possession of his five senses—or even of one or two of them. The second statement is what is known as an opinion, and is put forward as being such and nothing more; the speaker makes no suggestion that it has a universal application. But in the case of the third statement we are concerned with the enunciation of a principle of what might be called a spiritual law that no man or woman can afford to disregard. The author of it says in effect: 'When you are able to review the experience of life from the central position which I occupy you will see that what I say is universally valid.' But valid in what sense?

In the sense, surely, that the description of the object will be found to be correct by every person who is capable

of viewing it without emotional bias. For on this interior plane, no less than on that of Science, we are compelled to postulate the existence of a common meeting-place—a region of what might be described as subjectively objective truth. In other words, the function of intuition on the plane of inner experience must correspond fairly exactly to that of accurate observation on the material level. The only difference is that while the data of Science are perceptible to the physical senses (or convertible into such data), those of intuition are perceptible only to the inner senses. To examine an object from the metaphysical point of view is thus to determine the nature of its non-physical affinities. Men distrust this pursuit because they are aware that in following it they are venturing upon dangerous ground. But that is really by the way. The difficulties which they encounter are simply those which are incidental to going a little deeper below the surface, a consequence of becoming more truly human. As to the ‘subjective’ nature of the data, this is simply to say that in this type of research the clocks and measuring rods are to be found inside instead of outside the soul. And in any case, it is surely obvious that unless ‘purely personal’ judgments corresponded sometimes to a vision of something which, like an object on the physical plane, was substantially the same for everybody who looked at it with the eye of sanity, the communication of inner experience would be a matter of impossibility. What is a ‘happy image’? Otto Weiniger, that twisted, passionate soul, remarks somewhere: ‘There is fear before the Swan.’ Probably nonsense. But the point is that there must be some truth *of that order* about the Swan, whether Weiniger had a glimpse of it or not. If objects are not connected with one another by affinities which are not only of a more interior order than those with which Science deals, but at the same time equally evident to all observers who put themselves in a position to see them, the world is, indeed, curiously constituted.

In a word, the man of insight penetrates to the ideal nature of the object, exhibits its deeper relationships, and connects it organically with the rest of life. The phantast, on the contrary, describes not the object itself, but his personal distortion of it. In the example of the Swan which we have just been considering he might, for instance, write a poem about it which would betray nothing more than the results of some purely personal and morbid reaction to the creature in childhood. In the same way the bad critic sees the object in relation to his own trivial circumstances; it becomes improperly associated for him with his past, his personal sympathies, his disguised wishes. The good critic, on the other hand, sees it ideally, realizes the order to which it belongs, raises it above the level of flux. Again, in the sphere of creation, the inferior painter, instead of portraying the object under the aspect of infinity, produces a picture which is blurred by the false infinite of personal feeling. He offers the spectator not an image of the object as seen from an individual angle, but a fusion of it with the symbols of undistilled emotion.

Phantasy, therefore, might be defined as the product of inferior perception on the plane of inner experience. The phantast refashions the image of the thing seen in accordance with his passing prejudice. All objects bear the reflection of his passions, dreams, and desires. Preferences are raised by him to the level of objective laws, what is yearned for is seen by him on all sides, what is feared is denied existence; the surrounding world becomes a sort of gigantic extension of his personality, and he rules over it with unremitting despotism. No combination of circumstances is obstinate enough to resist the manipulation to which he subjects it; he reshapes the life about him perpetually, a pathetic little God whose world, although possibly consistent with itself, is completely inconsistent with the greater one which lies beyond it.

To this luxuriating in the personal and subjective we have already opposed that vision of ideal values which constitutes a sort of spiritual equivalent of scientific accuracy. But the parallel is, of course, far from exact. Here we encounter a number of difficult points.

In the first place, it is worth noting, perhaps, that in considering the object from the metaphysical point of view the imaginative observer is progressing, as it were, in a dimension which is at right angles to that of scientific enquiry. There is absolutely no conflict between any system which he may create as the result of his intuitive perceptions and the already familiar system of physical science. One lies within the other. If, to take an extreme example, I make an oracular theosophical pronouncement to the effect that the planet Mars, the colour Red, the note G, the number Nine, and the sign Aries are all, if the fact could only be realized, diverse manifestations of a certain principle in life, this set of correlations has no direct reference to any established by orthodox science.* Again, it is to be observed that there are many respects in which the apprehension of truth in the field of inner experience is less straightforward than it is on that of physical science. We are now concerned with life processes, and have to consider the circumstance that the same fact can be expressed with fair accuracy by the use of a wide range of images; there are endless ways, for instance, in which a poet can symbolize the notion of spiritual stagnation. Further, there is the fact on which I have already touched, that the experience of the artist only exists for a certain order of consciousness, and is correspondingly distorted by others; the object is common only to a collection of observers of a very special type. Again, there is the trap that the expression of personal phantasy (which might be

* The distinction between these two orders of truth was, as is well known, emphasized by Bacon, who also pointed out the vicious results of confounding them.

defined as a vision of real objects in displaced connections*) and the enunciation of the results of a true seeing on the subjective plane—what could be described as objective inner perception—are both necessarily cast into the same form. Both appear as statements of personal opinion. 'I think,' 'What I have found is,' 'I believe': such words constitute the prelude both to the observations of a Dante and the ravings of a lunatic. And the only check on which is which is by an appeal to introspection. The naturalistically minded thinker is bewildered by this fact, because he has identified the impersonal with the 'true.' As a result, he is confused by the general *contradictoriness* which is so characteristic of statements of more interior experience. The testimony of one man seems, when taken on the formal level, to conflict with that of another, or even with itself. But this fact does not justify him in concluding that once he leaves the level of physical science all is necessarily chaos. The artist, or indeed anybody who is concerned with the inner life, is bound to contemplate the world from a definite and limited angle. He is prejudiced in favour of certain aspects of it rather than others. His description of the situation thus bears a definite personal stamp; art is individual. Yet even on the level of the physical plane a description of Trafalgar Square from the north side is just as valid as one made from the south. And the difference between the visions of artists is very much of this order. We are debarred in this crepuscular region from inspecting the object directly. Truth is obtained by a sort of triangulation, a synthesis of the reports of observers stationed at different viewpoints. We might, perhaps, describe the genius by saying that his point of vantage is more centrally placed than those of lesser men.

The question is, I admit, extremely difficult. But in

* We must not here forget the dictum of Protagoras that 'that which appears to each, is.'

any case, the point is that the appeal of the man of inner vision is to the imagination. We find Coleridge writing, therefore, in *The Friend*: 'I have said, that my system compels me to make every fair appeal to the feelings, the imagination, and even the fancy.' He adds, cogently enough, 'If these are to be withheld from the service of Truth, to what purpose were they given?'

THE INTUITIVE LIFE

I

THE preceding chapter was devoted to clearing the ground for an examination of the function of intuition in the personal life. To this we can now proceed.

The first point to note is the analogy with Art. Both the artist and the individual with refined social perceptions excel in distinguishing all sorts of subtle impressions which escape the ordinary observer. Both relate the object to a more extended order of experience. But whereas the artist expresses his appreciation of such points by creating poems, symphonies, or pictures, the other expresses it in terms of discriminating living. Superior perception produces in one field good art, and in the other the individual who is more profoundly orientated to life than the run of men—given, of course, that in both cases there is present the will to act upon the conclusions which such perception has inspired. But when a man chooses to express this deeper consciousness in the form of a superior type of life, various factors become involved which demand careful scrutiny.

It is to be noted, in the first place, that the person of this type enjoys an enhanced sensitiveness to a special class of affinities between objects: the most subtle of the intimations which he receives refer to their relation to himself.* He is aware, more than anything, of the multi-

* This, I think, is the most characteristic manifestation of intuition. The intuitive person exhibits the keenest discrimination in deciding what is desirable or undesirable in relation to himself and his destiny. He distinguishes in the interests of self-adaptation. I am anxious not to be unjust to Prof. Valentine, but so far as I can judge from the Press reports of his address to the British Association in 1927 on the subject of

tudinous ways in which he touches the world around him, and this in relation to adapting himself to it effectively. Deep down in his heart he feels, perhaps, the 'call' of the East, a sense that there is a false element in his friendship with another, an unassignable impulse to change his occupation, the need for a certain type of suffering. And it is on his ability to capture the exact quality of such evasive impressions that the success of his adaptation depends. If he exhibits real discrimination between the appropriate and the non-appropriate, he achieves a stable type of organization, just as the artist achieves a stable type of organization in his work. If he fails to appreciate such differences, the result is that condition which we describe as 'maladjustment.' Operating in the sphere of moral judgment, this faculty of divination is called 'conscience.' The voice of 'conscience' may be regarded, that is to say, as the form under which there are presented to the consciousness indications of the direction in which there lies for the individual the possibility of achieving a higher level of synthesis. But we may regard it here simply as a particular manifestation of taste—taste exhibited in connection with the process of self-adaptation. In any case, the point to note is that there is no sphere in which it can be exercised with more subtle discrimination, in which the alternatives offered to the individual are presented with more insistence, in which the situations regarding which discernment is required are more varied in character.

Here we must pause and consider an important point.

Intuition in Women, he appears to have left this factor entirely out of account in his calculations. If this is, indeed, the case, it only constitutes a further indication of the misrepresentative nature of any conclusions regarding spiritual experience which are arrived at as the result of researches undertaken by the purely scientific type of intelligence.

The decisions at which the intuitive type arrives are based, as we have seen, upon the examination of a mass of delicate and fleeting impressions regarding the more obscure relationships of objects. But the concern which he has with them is of a particular order. It must on no account be confused with anything like that preoccupation with the 'stream of consciousness,' that plunging into the ocean of flux, with which we are being made so familiar to-day.

I have already alluded more than once to the fact that we find ourselves to-day in the midst of a reaction from the mechanistic spirit of Victorian thought. The thinker of the last century was, we are beginning to realize, under a constant temptation to violate the completeness of experience in the interests of systematization or clarity. We ourselves, on the contrary, are becoming increasingly conscious of the significance of all sorts of aspects of life which were simply left out of account in the nineteenth-century picture of the world.* All this is perfectly healthy and promising for the future. But it is important that the nature of this compensatory movement should not be misrepresented. It is in no sense a 'revolt from Reason.'† A revolt from Reason would be nothing less than a relapse from the human to the animal level. Nor is it a revolt from too much Reason. It is rather a protest against pre-occupation with certain limited aspects of experience at the expense of others. It is the expression of a newly discovered need to realize the object organically, in its totality. The modern mind refuses to remain satisfied

* The question has been dealt with at length in Prof. Whitehead's important work, *Science and the Modern World* (1926).

† See, for example, an article by Prof. J. A. Hobson in *The Nation* for November 14, 1925, in which he interprets this movement as the expression of the need for a little playful illogicality to relieve the strain of being continuously scientific!

with a conception of life which is based on the arbitrary abstractions made by Science.

There is, however, another side to the question. This reaction from excessive rigidity is, as one would expect, proceeding too far. The end of a sane anti-intellectualism takes the form of an immersion in the crude, unshaped stuff of experience. The tendency is exhibited completely enough in the field of literature. One finds a whole school of writers who are interested in little else than a succession of states of mind. Life has become disintegrated for them; nothing is very much more important than anything else, for when it is a question of savouring experience instead of interpreting it, everything is reduced to the same dead level. The attention is distributed uniformly. There is no emphasis, no hierarchy of experience. There are no centres of interest which persist long enough to constitute the nuclei of aggregates of minor experiences, no vortices into which smaller events are irresistibly drawn, no really crucial situations. The result is nothing else but the presentation of literature at the foetal stage of creation; what is set before the reader is a collection of material which could be used by a creative thinker to produce something really valuable. What these pertinacious introverts have to offer us is an enormous bundle of loose ends: subtle little misgivings, endless recollections, obstinate questionings, vague realizations—endless matter for reflection, but nothing conclusive. The attitude exhibited towards experience is purely passive. It is an expression of a retreat from central principles which is closely parallel to the adopting of a mechanistic attitude in the field of Science.

There is no need for me to enter at this point into a discussion of the varied and pernicious effects of this cult of sensationalism. It represents clearly a relapse to the naturalistic level of consciousness, and has been fostered, I think, by theories such as Bergson's. Not, of course,

that Bergson can be considered as being directly responsible for such vagaries. But his ideas happen to be extremely dangerous to those people who are naturally prone to substitute vague apprehension for controlled thought and are only too ready to fall back into the twilight of consciousness on any excuse, Bergsonian or otherwise.*

And now to come to the point. The intuitive person, as I have already remarked, shares with the sensationist an interest in the penumbra of consciousness. But he is concerned with it only for the sake of gaining a realization of those deeper movements of life which the ordinary thinker is inclined to treat with undue negligence. Such experience is, for him, only raw material—a collection of indications which have to be painfully followed up. The conduct of the intuitive life, like that of any other which is really creative, demands laborious thought and, above all, *will*. It is only when the stuff of consciousness has been shaped by resolute thought that there emerge for the intuitive person those principles for which he is seeking. Intuition is no more a ‘gift’ or an accident than the ability to draw correctly; it is developed like any other faculty. Deep spiritual illumination is only obtained at the cost of determined action on the basis of the relatively small degree of enlightenment which has been obtained at the outset. Only by acting on the obscure intuitions which are initially received can the individual place himself in a position to obtain further light.

* The criticism of this tendency in modern thought is being brilliantly prosecuted in *The Enemy* of Mr Wyndham Lewis, to which periodical I refer the reader who desires to see the problem in a clear prospective.

2

It is not so much that the intuitive individual is the recipient of impressions which are denied to other types. It is rather that he is willing to pay attention to a host of minor stimuli to which most people are exposed, but which the majority ignore. Everybody is presented, in the course of the day, with all sorts of little indications which represent, as it were, the oblique prospects of significant areas of knowledge. Looked at in this perspective, they are easily enough passed over; considered by the careful thinker, they prove to be of the greatest importance. Yet really intuitive people are not satisfied even with this realization. When confronted with such situations they are not content merely to probe into their nature; they are impelled to orientate themselves in accordance with what they have found out. In terms of life, realization which is not followed by action can only result in something like internal poisoning. To feel that a contact is somehow false, that one is, for some obscure reason, responsible for another, that two types of association are, all appearances to the contrary, really incompatible, that some pursuit must be abandoned for no reason that is apparent at the time—these are the kinds of intuitive apprehension which serve to render the timid soul uneasy and discontented, but which inspire a more positive type to destroy his existing world for the sake of a more fundamental order of co-ordination. What for the first class of sensitive people is merely an unattached thread can be for the other 'the end of a golden string.'

The enterprise of following one's intuitions in this way, wherever they may lead, is both hazardous and painful. It is a form of 'living dangerously' which is discouraged by the stable-minded, which appears to the unimaginative as inconsequent, which is simply shirked by that type of

rationalistic thinker who puts his trust only in those conclusions which are duly supported by concrete evidence. Such people refuse to accept a conclusion as valid until the evidence for it has been 'released,' like a cinema film, by the hand of Time. They refuse to recognize the patent fact that it is of the essence of life that the ideas which we gain of the processes which are accomplishing themselves around us should come into our consciousness in the same way that so many babies enter the world—wrong end first.

Such intuitive ideas, it is true, differ from one another in one important respect—that of their verifiability. But for the present it is sufficient to note that the ideas which provide the incentive for really creative living are those which not only relate to the more intimate life of the subject, but can only be tested by acting upon them without further illumination. More than any others, they are the driving force behind the lives of men and women of the artistic and the religious type. Such people can only remain in harmony with themselves by making continual decisions of a very special order. Unlike the rationalist, to whom it is open either to respect the concrete evidence at his disposal or illogically to disregard it, they are continually presented with a choice between what is palpable, evident, and immediate, and what is merely felt—and often felt very obscurely—to make for creativeness, truth, or a richer life. To live by intuition is to be prepared at any moment to follow the deeper feelings at the expense of rational considerations, to tread boldly and trustfully along a road which presents itself as leading towards some deeper aspect of reality, to be constantly performing actions each of which arises out of the last, but which are only seen in retrospect to constitute a series. The intuitive individual follows a path which never runs straight for more than a few yards at a time, a path which, although it appears to be eccentric

or oblique when regarded from the standpoint of the Euclidean world, proceeds with unwavering directness in the dimension of the spiritual. The artist who suddenly abandons a perfected style in order to experiment in a new and unpopular manner, the person who is brave enough to retire from the world against all his material interests in order to effectuate some needed interior adjustment, the man or woman for whom a spiritual obligation is of more consequence than any imposed by class, tradition, or convention—these are the people who may be said to be living the intuitive life in all its richness. What they stand for is the reshaping of society in terms of the passionate fighting through by each human creature to the conditions in which alone it can fulfil its deepest destiny. This quest demands not only clarity of mind, but love, passion, and faith in the fact that the temporarily latent and unseen will ultimately become the visible and the justified.

We realize here the social significance of the artist. For it is the artist who, more than any other type, concentrates on those elements in our personal lives which are evaded by less realistic souls. It is he of all people who is occupied with such questions as that of truth in personal relationships, the fitness of means to ends, the invisible but potent flow of life between individuals, their deep inner movements, the profundity with which every passing situation is conceived. I am not, of course, speaking here of the figure of the artist as he exists in the popular imagination, but of the hard-working, sincere, realistic type of creative thinker who is alone worthy of the title. Such a person watches men and women with an intense interest of which other types are incapable, rejoicing when he is privileged to witness such a spectacle as that of pure impulse expressing itself in beautiful action, or vision imaged in perfection of gesture, turning away disappointed the moment the mind is seen to have outrun the

material on which it is working, detesting all ideas which do not spring out of rich and immediate experience. Like the mystic—his only compeer—he knows the great secret that all really creative processes in life take place in the human heart; that all forces which make for growth and fulness of existence flow between individual human beings; that the important social happenings, those that lie at the root of all those others which sociology investigates, take place in rooms where a few people are gathered together; that to place the general before the particular is to commit spiritual suicide; that to perfect personal relationships is to begin the reform of the world at the beginning.

It is true, of course, that the instinctive sympathy of the true artist for such ideas is obscured for the observer by the fact that he appears, more than anybody else, to be capable of capriciousness, childish anger, violent prejudice. But these are simply the vagaries which invariably attend the power to live profoundly on other occasions. You cannot have vision, passion, and creativeness except at the expense of an emotional instability from which less inspired types are immune. The ability to soar high implies the possibility of falling grievously low. Only the ardent can make fools of themselves in certain ways; only the man of passion is capable of a certain pure type of anger; only the man who possesses a spiritual will is capable of true sin. Most important of all, only by fearlessly exposing oneself to the possibility of painful disillusionment, injury, and humiliation can one learn anything about life which is of the slightest value. The behaviour of the artist may bewilder and often offend the cautious, systematic type of thinker, but it is he who is the real seeker after truth.

To return to the point. It is the time element which puts man to the test. The intuitive observer is for ever being called upon to act upon evidence which is momen-

tarily, if not ultimately, purely subjective, that of 'things not seen' rather than of the senses. The landmarks of such a person are largely interior; only with the passage of time do they become visible to the rest of the world. From the point of view of the mass of humanity, the man, therefore, appears to be irrational and perverse. And since he himself has usually no very clear realization of the root cause of his eccentricity, it follows that he is involved in a succession of periods of torment and mental confusion the negotiation of which demands unwavering faith. On the other hand, this deeper orientation to life brings with it compensation enough. If we consider ourselves from that cold and purely intellectual angle from which the scientist regards society, we discover that we possess various rights, obligations, and capacities which have to be given due recognition. But the pattern into which we thus fit ourselves is of a purely theoretical order. Once, however, we penetrate to a deeper level than that dealt with by the calculating intelligence, we become conscious of another set of relationships, not rigid and mechanical, but living, flexible, organic. We find, to our surprise, that the objects of our world have been regrouped, that the ways of communication now run athwart those which have been so carefully and conscientiously traced out by the sociologists, that what was separated on the surface is here united, what coherent now discontinuous, what superior now subaltern. Such is the result of a transition from the plane of form to that of essence. We are now seeing life anew from the angle of the mystic and the artist. It is as if things were now connected for us by threads of fire instead of by cold, geometrical lines. The electric force of passion has produced a disturbance in the field of our attention, polarized its objects, and rearranged them in an exciting and significant pattern. The fruit of the pilgrimage is a vision of principles.

3

The conflict which has just been examined can be resolved, of course, into an opposition between the claims of Intuition and Reason.

The function of Reason is that of organizing experience. As rational beings, we are compelled to elaborate some sort of a system in order to master the infinitely complicated facts of life. When the experience which we thus manipulate is all on the same level, the task is not one of great difficulty. The universe of Science, for instance, can be effectively reduced to order just on account of its purely physical nature.* Again, the 'philosophy' of pure paganism is capable of being clearly and consistently stated, for it is a philosophy which is based on restricting the attention to the experience of the natural man. When, however, the individual becomes conscious of the fact that he is living in several worlds at the same time and that the claims of some are incompatible with those of others, complications result. The normal way out of the difficulty is that with which psycho-analysis has made us familiar enough: rationalization. Analysed, this process is seen to consist in attempting, on the one hand, to pass off lower propensities as being more elevated than they actually are, and, on the other, of representing all moral imperatives which disturb the equanimity of the subject as having a less exalted origin than that which is usually attributed to them. The drunkard justifies his

* Prof. Eddington writes, for instance, on p. 212 of *Science, Religion, and Reality* (1925): 'That dynamic quality by which Nature is not merely something which exists, but is something which becomes, is not in the physical scheme, and must be introduced like actuality by filling the skeleton scheme of physics with things which over and above their physical definition have a value for consciousness—i.e., a spiritual value.'

excesses by his need for support during a business crisis, while the naturalistic thinker 'explains' religion as being nothing but an expression of primitive fear. In both cases, it is to be noted, experience is made to accommodate itself to the sort of universe in which the person can lead an ordered, satisfying type of existence.

Such efforts to distort reality are, of course, thoroughly pernicious. If modern psychology has any definite gospel to offer us, it is that man must at all costs face the full facts of the case. Such facts vary, naturally enough, with the individual; spiritual experience in any completeness is, for example, the privilege of the few. But whatever the nature of a person's subjective world, it is imperative that he should define to himself the elements of which it is made up, and shape his life accordingly. It matters little in this connection whether such elements are poor or rich, small or great in number; what is important is that he should live in a universe the component parts of which have been clearly grasped by the mind. That is to say, the man must decide what he really believes, what he really knows, what he aspires to, and what he repudiates. What does the damage is a confusion of planes: expansive emotion disguised as spirituality, concupiscence presented as love, selfishness posing as altruism. The result in the sphere of individual life is a psyche divided against itself, in that of Art sentimentality and obscurity, in that of ideas the obliteration of the fundamental anatomy of thought. The greater part of our modern thinking on social problems, for instance, is vitiated by the fact that, as Hulme has pointed out, the levels of the biological and the spiritual are being confounded in the same way that those of the material and the biological were confounded by Nineteenth-Century Materialism.*

* 'It is by the agency of indistinct conceptions,' says Coleridge in *The Friend*, 'as the counterfeits of the ideal and transcendent, that evil and vanity exercise their tyranny

The task of disengaging the elements of a complex which has been created by such an obliteration of the primary levels of experience can be at times extraordinarily difficult. Particularly is this so when what one is concerned with is the attempt of sophisticated thought to present its picture of the world as being more complete than it really is. The case is stated with such finish and completeness that it is only at the expense of considerable patience that one can gain a realization of the nature of the misrepresentation which is taking place. There are many modern writers, for instance, who are capable of offering us in their work an irreproachable façade. Only by degrees do we come to see the extent to which the symmetry of the structure we are admiring is achieved at a price; that the elegance, suavity of form, and lightness of build by which we are charmed are the very symbols of a disregard for more profound and disturbing considerations. The whole appeal of their work hangs precariously upon the fact that certain deep issues are continually and most unobtrusively left out of account. Throughout their pages we are beguiled by a sureness of

on the feelings of man.' And again he speaks of ' . . . the habituation of the intellect to clear, distinct, and adequate conceptions concerning all things that are the possible objects of clear conception, and thus to reserve the deep feelings which belong, as by a natural right, to those obscure ideas that are necessary to the moral perfection of the human being, notwithstanding, yes, even in consequence, of their obscurity—to reserve these feelings, I repeat, for objects which their very sublimity renders indefinite, no less than their indefiniteness renders them sublime—namely, to the ideas of being, form, life, the reason, the law of conscience, freedom, immortality, God! To connect with the objects of our senses the obscure notions and consequent vivid feelings, which are due only to immaterial and permanent things, is profanation relatively to the heart, and superstition in the understanding.'

touch, a mastery of the material, which the author can only maintain at the cost of constantly, and I would even say arbitrarily, refusing to entertain certain types of impressions. The order that has been achieved has been produced by an act of will. The whole man is not involved in the process of creation; the mind establishes a system of attractive and plausible relationships by resolutely holding a certain part of its experience at a remove.

One sees the same process at work also in the field of criticism. 'The beautiful,' for instance, has only been isolated for discussion at the expense of considerable violence to its natural associations. The very term 'æsthetic' suggests dangerous possibilities in the way of sensationalism. For it is the experience of every man who is living a rounded and complete life that beauty appears to the soul only in the form of the complexion assumed by the reality for which he is at the moment seeking. Its function is that of luring us ever on into more profound levels of existence. It is the first form in which there is presented to our consciousness something more complete than that of which we are already aware. And to follow the indication which is thus given us is to become involved for a time in laceration and confusion. The sensationalist, on the contrary, attempts to enjoy this emanation from beyond without paying for it by discipline and suffering. He wilfully detaches the sense impression from the inner impulse to which it is wedded, pauses on it, savours it until its bloom begins to fade, and organizes into a system of æsthetics the experience which he has obtained by arresting the process halfway. Half modern literature is based upon this skimming off of the 'æsthetic' aspect of experience and subsequently dwelling upon it. It must therefore be described as decadent.

On the other hand, nobody can make a more valuable contribution to our understanding of the nature of existence than by delimiting clearly the field of his experience.

To define successfully any sphere of thought or feeling is, *ipso facto*, to clarify the conception of that to which it is opposed; in tracing out the line of the coast we necessarily indicate at the same time the boundaries of the sea. Our picture of the nature of the spiritual man is sharpened by Tolstoi's delineation of the natural one; the nature of mysticism emerges with greater definiteness when we are presented with the point of view of a powerful thinker who leaves it altogether out of account; scepticism throughout history has played an invaluable part in the shaping of dogma.

It is apparent, also, that we can accommodate the non-rational in our system without departing from the principles of Reason. All that happens is that, as we become more sophisticated, we recognize it for what it is. We draw our little maps of the world, taking care to leave certain areas blank. The wise man is he who has a clear realization of what belongs naturally to each level of being, who avoids projecting into one sphere what appertains to another, who keeps the teleological and the mechanical properly separated, appreciates where the sphere of the natural ends and that of the spiritual begins, and neither confounds the animal with the human nor the human with the divine.

Returning now to the question of intuition, we may observe that, whatever the stage which the individual has reached in his development, he has perpetually to struggle with the claims of that which is, on the one hand, above, and that which is, on the other, below, the level on which he is standing. With the conflict with the sub- and irrational (as when we resist the temptation to abandon a considered policy out of sheer funk, or reject the fascinating theory that the earth is flat) we are not here concerned. We are interested, rather, in the temporarily non-rational.

This temporarily non-rational may be defined in a

general way as that which belongs to a more profound level of truth than that on which the individual is living at the time. Whatever emanates in any manner from this deeper level of being has the effect, of course, of threatening the stability of the person's universe. He is confronted with the existence of potencies which he can only recognize at the cost of re-ordering his world to a greater or a smaller degree. This principle runs through all experience, however comparatively trivial. The 'refined' individual, for instance, has an organized set of æsthetic tastes; he possesses certain more or less consciously formulated standards of beauty. On meeting for the first time a group of really creative artists, he is disconcerted to discover that in their habits, conversation, taste in decoration, and the like they are anything but 'artistic' in the sense in which he is accustomed to use the term. They are interested in a deeper level of synthesis which, if he does not run away from them, he learns in time to appreciate. In the same way the spiritual seer bewilders the man who is living on the plane of worldly wisdom by insisting on the reality of various factors in experience to which the other has hitherto paid no attention. The result of his influence is that the other modifies his system of ideas extensively so that it shall accommodate spiritual as well as natural experience.

This process of adaptation is, of course, continuous in our experience. It is true that as we develop it tends to become less and less violent. We arrive in time at the cost of much thought and suffering at a grasp of the main features of the structure: the general nature of the three worlds of matter, life, and spirit, and the relations subsisting between them. Having gained this realization, we are at least guaranteed immunity from the sudden collapse of the mental world in which we are living. But in life we have to deal, not only with principles, but with their operation in an endless succession of particular situations,

and we are faced for ever with the conflicting appeals of the known and the temporarily or permanently unknown. And in so far as the unknown and unverified is of such a nature that it implies a demand for faith—calls, that is to say, for some sort of action based on evidence afforded by inner experience alone—we are confronted in practice with a conflict between the claims of intuition and reason.

HUMANISM AND RELIGION

I

THE general thesis of this book will by now, I hope, be fairly clear. To state the position in very rough terms, what I am suggesting is that the only true foundation for a stable type of social order is that which would be created by the mind of the philosopher brooding over the experience of the artist and the mystic.

I have consistently laid stress upon the difference which exists between superior sensibility and that crude order of perception which we have seen to lie at the basis of so much scientific theorizing on the nature and behaviour of human beings. Further, I have attributed such superior sensibility indifferently to artists, sensitives, intuitive individuals, and sophisticated men of the world—to anybody, in fact, who, in contrast to the indescribably unimaginative sociologist, can be reasonably assumed to be endowed with some sense of the more subtle values of life.

It has now become necessary to narrow down the issues to some extent. Humanism, properly understood, necessarily involves the elaboration of principles of conduct and taste in the light of the widest possible range of human experience. Its canons embody, in the last resort, a conception of life which is to be attained to by respecting to the full the findings of clarified instinct and intuition. But it pays regard to such findings chiefly to the extent that they serve to throw light on the nature of our experience of this world; the modern type of humanist at least may be said to concern himself with man just in so far as he is *not* conscious of his fundamental kinship with God. For this reason it is bound in the end to fail to satisfy the demands of an honest mind. For we are obliged

in the end to reckon with the fact that, just as the plane of the humanistic transcends that of naturalistic thought, so is it itself transcended by the plane of the specifically religious. And to build effectively man must pay due regard to both these levels of inner experience. He must do full justice to the world as it presents itself to refined natural perception, and he must recognize at the same time the sense in which its deeper significance lies only in something beyond itself. The first mode of consciousness calls inevitably for its completion by the second; to contemplate life resolutely in all its fulness is to be driven in the end to recognize the existence of something by which that fulness is denied.

What I wish to bring out in this chapter is the bearing of this distinction on practical conduct. The achieving of a heightened awareness of the deeper movement of life constitutes, as I see the matter, the first stage of the emancipation of the individual from the region of purely naturalistic thought. And this principle applies also to that less obvious type of naturalism which takes the form of undue indulgence in abstract thought on human problems. All our theorizing and philosophizing about social questions is nugatory until we have come, to some degree at least, to look at life through the eyes of the artist. Yet if we are to attain to any real spiritual stability something further is required: we must envisage our human experience in the light of whatever realization we can attain to of the divine. All the finest art creations may be seen to embody this realization to a considerable degree. But this is a very different matter from its embodiment in the conduct and structure of a life. As far as the actual business of living is concerned it remains true that no man, however purified his æsthetic perceptions, however developed his powers of expression, can be said to be firmly established on this plane of existence until he has organized his inner life in relation to his consciousness

of God. The significance of this point can most effectively be brought out, I think, by a comparison of the respective approaches to experience of the mystic* and the artist, although I am aware of the fact that in thus identifying for my present purpose the artist with the humanist I am somewhat distorting the nature of the true situation. Not, however, in any serious sense. Humanism, as I say, resolves itself in the end into the organization by reason of the experience of the artist.

2

Whatever the divergencies between their respective outlooks, the artist and the mystic have this in common: that they are antagonistic to any system of ideas which tends to obliterate the uniqueness of the individual, either by measuring his significance in terms of general, theoretical ideas, or by unduly subordinating his interests to those of the community; that they emphasize the preponderance of the incomprehensible and transcendental elements in life at the expense of the concrete certainties with which the ordinary understanding works; that they derive their strength from following instincts and intuitions which, although cogent, cannot at the moment be justified by reasoning.

Nevertheless, in considering life, each type lays the

* The terms 'mystic' and 'mysticism' should be used with the greatest caution. Their employment gives occasion to so much confusion that it would be safer, perhaps, to make use of them only in connection with that type of religious ecstasy in which the normal conditions of consciousness are transcended and the soul rises from the plane of form to that of essence (or however else one likes to put it). But I have chosen to mean by it here a religious attitude in which symbolism, contemplation, and esotericism play a larger part than legalism, institutionalism and respect for the letter rather than for the spirit.

emphasis on a different place. For the typical artist the spiritual is a reality only in so far as it is enshrined in the most concrete of forms; he is moved most of all, in fact, by embodiments of the universal which are so particular, so limited, in character that he scarcely suspects them to be such. He may, without being conscious of the fact himself, express the infinite by the very passion with which he dedicates himself to the concrete, but this is a fact which must be pointed out to him afterwards by others of a more speculative cast of mind, and in any case, their conclusions have usually little interest for him. All he knows consciously is that this individual face, this unique disposition of natural beauty, must not be permitted to perish unrecorded. A confirmed extravert, he finds it almost impossible to conceive of a Word which has not taken on any but the most substantial garment of flesh. The quality of his interest is such, also, that it renders him indifferent to the element of change in life. The passage of the years does not exist for him; he is concerned with spatial relationships only. The position of an object in time may be a constitutive element in his vision of it, but is only one of the factors in a situation which itself is to be raised by passionate contemplation above the level of flux. In appreciating he eternalizes.

Perhaps the most marked feature of the mystic's outlook, on the contrary, is his peculiar sensitiveness to just this dimension of Time. He views everything around him as it is glimpsed momentarily in its passage from crystallization into separate existence to reabsorption in the All. Nothing has any reality for him but the Eternal which alone is, but which yet can only be realized through the transient and the highly particularized. Hence his scrutiny, like that of the artist, is concentrated on the most individual of objects, and he unites with him further in repudiating the cloudy shapes and melting outlines of the pseudo-infinite which are so dear to the

Rousseauistic dreamer. He knows well that it is only when objects are clearly focussed by the perceiving mind that they can serve as media—the sole media—through which the lineaments of the One can be apprehended. But—and this time in contrast to the artist—his profound sense of the transitoriness of all forms enables him to contemplate with equanimity the disintegration of these fleeting embodiments of Eternal Reality. He accepts completely the limitations set him by Time and Space, but only to pass, through the completeness of such acceptance, into a region where they are not. He resembles the artist in concentrating before everything on the concrete object, but possesses a clearer consciousness of the sense in which it is more than it appears to be. He is thus immune from the other's typical dependence upon it, and is consequently better equipped for dealing with the general problems of life. His intuitions are less restricted to limited occasions and conjunctions. Although equally conscious of the inexhaustible inwardness of the object, he is able to retire more easily from the zone of its magnetism, to distil from his experience of it principles which he can apply to a wider range of situations. And as his vision of these general laws becomes increasingly clear his forces are less and less polarized by the particular event; he gains the power to envisage it in relation to a series of others, to contemplate it serenely from a central point of vantage rather than be drawn into its terrifying depths against his will.

The privilege which the mystic enjoys in this respect is one which derives directly from his self-consciousness. Unlike the artist, he possesses the ability, not only to contemplate the objects of the world in a spirit of passion, but to contemplate the results of his contemplation. It is this further act of introversion which places him in a stronger position in relation to life. He is able to organize his inner experience and thus to master it. And as he does

so, life becomes more and more the revelation of a deep, underlying order.

For the typical artist, on the other hand, existence resolves itself into a series of differently coloured moments, agonized, inspiring, ecstatic, but rarely co-ordinated in accordance with any profound principle. Hence his notorious childishness, his helplessness in the face of fate. It is true that his instincts about life are superior to those of the ordinary man, but they are only applied seriously and consistently to the resolving of technical and limited problems; only rarely does he feel any powerful obligation to extend to the conduct of his life the discipline which he imposes upon himself in painting a picture or composing a tragedy. It is only the mystic who is occupied with the ordering of *all* inner experience into a system—or rather with its interpretation in terms of a scheme which is itself intuitively apprehended, a scheme which only presents itself to the consciousness *pari passu* with his embodying of it in his actual life.

In the light of the above considerations it should, I think, be apparent that the basis of what I have described as the intuitive life must be more mystical than 'artistic' in character. The artist is essentially an irresponsible character, a creature of contradictory moods, violent reactions and perverse sympathies. Any communal life based on such bohemian inconsequence would surely soon become chaotic. And yet, as I hope to have made clear, you cannot afford to dispense with the priceless instincts of the artist. Nor can you allow them to express themselves uncontrolled. They must be encouraged, but subordinated to a deeper, more enduring principle.

As I see the matter, that principle is the religious, the mystical. Only when the intuitions regarding the infinity of isolated situations in daily life are balanced by others concerning such things as the deeper purposes of that life, of the penetration of the details of existence with a wider

meaning, can sensitiveness be effectively divorced from caprice. It is not only that the artist has usually no vision of a thread running through the whole pattern; he has no pattern. He experiences only a succession of situations. Except when actually creating, he fails to rise above the level of the incidental; he is too readily overpowered by the vividly realized moment. This is very much better than failing, like the ponderous sociologist, to realize the moment at all, but it means, nevertheless, that the shifting emotions of the artist are no basis for a solid social structure. True religion, however, wedding the same delicacy of inner perception to an intuitive recognition of more universal facts of inner experience, provides that element which is needed for the creation of a social order on an inspirational basis.

The difference between that breaking up of fixed conceptions and associations which is brought about by respect for such deeper principles and that which results from mere emotional instability is one which may not be at once apparent to anyone who can only see both as a relapse into chaos. Yet the distinction is fundamental and of the greatest importance. Perhaps the most marked result of following the mystical light in the face of rationalistic considerations is the progressive harmonizing of the life which is brought about as a result. The individual appears to be engaged in throwing everything into the melting pot, but as time passes it becomes evident that his experience is really only being regrouped round more stable and significantly placed centres. He not only becomes increasingly sensitive to the more subtle elements in human relationships, but he begins to be able to interpret them in terms of general and illuminating principles. He must still be continually prepared to follow blindly certain intimations which he is aware of as emanating from a deeper source of wisdom than any to which he has habitual access; but the results of his trustful

venturings become gradually consolidated, so that he is able to a greater and greater extent to act on the basis of data of which he is clearly conscious. What was previously performed as the result of an act of faith is now carried out in the light of a clearly realized principle.

What a man requires if he is to deal effectively with the problems of existence is a philosophy which in some way or other does justice to the uniqueness of each passing moment and yet at the same time renders it possible for him to relate it to a wider principle of life. Science, the artistic conception of living, and what is called Humanism, are each inadequate alone to achieve this purpose—Science, for the reason that the scientist is committed to handling nothing but experience which is non-personal, general, and susceptible of treatment only on the formal level; Art, because it over-emphasizes the importance of the fleeting situation; Humanism, because it is by nature vague, and fails to provide sufficient illumination on the problems of actual conduct.

What Humanism has to offer is really nothing more than the stimulus to taking a certain kind of interest in life. The humanistic thinker stresses the all-importance of Brotherhood, Social Service, Co-operation, Unity, and the like. If his thought is strongly coloured by the classical tradition he lays weight upon the importance of self-discipline, the checking of vague, romantic desires, the cultivation of a Stoical respect for the workings of immutable and universal law. If, on the other hand, he is by temperament more sanguine and generous, he becomes lyrical on the subject of brotherly love, comradeship, mutual aid. But in either case it is impossible to regard such a 'philosophy' of life as being in any way sufficient for the actual conduct of life. At the best it furnishes us with an impulse towards a very necessary concern with our fellow creatures. This, however, is only the beginning. However powerful that concern may become, it

does not in itself provide us with a means of dealing with the problems with which it automatically brings us into conflict. When we have reached the point of being inspired to action by this stirring message we are at the best in a position analogous to that of a nation which has been moved by a patriotic appeal to engage upon a war; we are obliged to express our enthusiasm in terms of organization, preparations, and strategic plans.

It is at this juncture that any such generous optimism breaks down. It rouses us to action and then leaves us unilluminated as to the ways and means of carrying it out. The naïve type of humanist imagines that warm-heartedness by itself is enough, and therefore, in the style of Mr Hamilton Fyfe, lightly dismisses such subjects as theology, epistemology, and casuistry as being nothing more than the products of so much arid speculation. But anybody who is able to recognize the elements which really serve to determine human behaviour must be aware that even such dry-as-dust creatures as theologians are instinctively drawn to relate their theorizing to *some* sort of reality. However true it may be that theology tends to be a sterile, unduly mechanized pursuit, the fact remains that even at its worst it represents the abuse of an important type of concern with experience. The kind of distinctions which theologians are engaged in establishing remain artificial and unreal to us only until the time is reached when we seriously attempt to live out the vague humanistic ideal in terms of actual conduct. Immediately we are presented, if we have any discrimination at all, with the old, old problems. We realize the nature of Grace, Sin, Redemption, the Transcendental, and the Ineffable; we find ourselves slipping into holding all the great heresies one by one, and painfully rejecting them in turn; we come to understand the nature of the difficult problems which centre round conscience. It is only the simple-minded soul who can believe that a mere expansive

feeling of goodness is sufficient to provide him with a guide to life. Humanism at this level represents really nothing more than an attempt to convert a very general tendency of our nature into a theory of conduct. It fills the heart with warm, generous feelings which are directed indifferently to the great mass of human kind. It ennobles, invigorates, and inspires—but only for a season. We pay subsequently for our exaltation by a period of dejection—that dejection which follows all responses to an incitement to act for an ill-defined object. What we are really in need of, we discover afterwards, is an indication of what such idealism—which is really the easy part of the business—means in terms of definite behaviour; what it signifies when brought into intimate relation with the immediacies of life.

But even the more critical humanist is obliged to take his stand on a basis which leaves us unsatisfied in the end. In so far as he is true to his faith he is bound to repudiate the significance of the mystical element in experience, of that element which is revealed most forcibly to the mind in the form of the Inner Witness of the Spirit. And this rejection of immediate inspiration means again that he is compelled to fall back upon the principles of classical morality, to regress into a consciousness which has since, for all that the modern rationalist may contend to the contrary, been outgrown by the race. The achievement of that 'moderation,' 'decorum,' and 'sobriety,' for which modern social philosophers like Prof. Irving Babbitt have made such an eloquent plea, is not fundamental enough to leave the specifically modern soul appeased. The Stoicism into which classical morality finally flowered leaves us in the end with an intolerable dualism on our hands. An opposition is created between the self and the rest of the universe which is never satisfactorily overcome. By his very concentration on the perfection of himself the individual is alienated from the remainder of life. The

greater the demands which it makes upon him the more rigid does the antithesis become, the more is he crystallized into a hard, clear shape at the cost of failing completely to reconcile subject and object in any creative synthesis.

We cannot rest at this stage. Somehow or other, we feel, we must bring about a deeper fusion between the individual and the surrounding world. The deep need in the human soul for such a union was one of the elements which contributed most to the expansion of Christianity at the beginning of our era; by a fruitful development of the conception of the Logos the dualism of classical thought was to some extent transcended; through the intermediary of the incarnated Son man was placed in immediate and quickening association with the Fount of All Being. The problem will always be with us. A heroic attempt to solve it on the plane of pure thought was made by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel at the beginning of the last century. It is not extravagant to suggest that it was assailed from a widely different angle by Beethoven in those final compositions of his which are such an embarrassment to those people who, by restricting their attention to his middle period, are enabled to invoke his name as one of the great prophets of humanism. And to the observer who is capable of realizing the significance of some of the more bewildering tendencies of modern thought it is obvious that more and more people are engaged in an attempt to solve it in terms of actual living. The perennial compulsion which it exercises on the human mind is a sufficient indication that man, when once he has passed beyond the naturalistic level of development, can never live by ethics and humanitarianism alone.

The fact is that Humanism as a creed fails to satisfy us because, paradoxically enough, its ideals are insufficiently lofty and remote. This is particularly apparent in the case of its less lofty manifestations. What Socialism,

for instance, has to offer us as an aim is the achieving of a state of things which we are capable of visualizing with comparative clearness, since it resolves itself into something very much like the extension to the masses of the world of familiar conditions at present enjoyed by a favoured minority. What is to be attained is something which, if remote, is yet finite and conceivable; it is only the emotions which are aroused by its contemplation which are indeterminate and vague. As a result, we are presented with an ideal which is incapable of exerting any sustained and regulative influence upon the souls of human beings. To be human is precisely to feel that in some way or other one is related to something which transcends the finite and conceivable. We turn to Art for the satisfaction of this yearning in ourselves, a yearning which is so deep that it will render inadequate for us any social ideal which does not embody to some degree the conception of *otherness*. At the bottom of our souls we want something more than the 'happiness' of which the Socialists are always speaking; we want not the improving and perfecting of the world, but its transfiguration, its complete permeation by something which belongs to a higher order of being, its very annihilation. In fine, the only ideal which can establish an enduring hold on men's hearts must be of a transcendental nature; it must bring us in one way or the other into relation with the infinite.

3

We come back, then, to Religion. For the only outlook in which a just recognition is paid to the significance of all the sides of a man's being is that of the truly religious man. Religion, when once it is purified of its primitive elements, is seen to combine Science, Art, and Humanism in such proportions that all three supplement and correct each other mutually in the most effective

possible manner. You cannot deny to reason its right to investigate the nature of every type of experience; you must not mutilate the completeness of the human being by the starvation of his senses or the inhibition of his impulse to create; you are compelled to introduce order into the region of our experience both of the human and of the divine. And yet to these three elements Religion adds a further one of greater importance than them all: an apprehension of the sense in which the universe of our ordinary experience is included in, and completed by, another more comprehensive than itself.

Religion in this sense, however, is, at the present day, the privilege of the few. Most people are, I believe, naturally interested in the religious problem. On the other hand, if they are at all sensitive and intelligent the word 'religion' has for them the most disagreeable associations. They are so extremely conscious of the horrors which have been, and still are, perpetrated in that lofty name that they are very pardonably almost incapable of disengaging the kernel of the pure experience from the repellent husk which it has accumulated with the passage of the centuries. It is true that the issue is becoming clearer year by year: psychological research is making it increasingly evident to those whose native instincts have not already told them the same thing, that the habit of mind which usually passes for 'religious' represents in most cases nothing more than an unhappy compromise between a genuine, but relatively feeble, spiritual urge on the one hand and an illicit gratification of the meaner impulses of the nature on the other. Narrow sectarianism, religious prudery, persistent concentration on one set of symbols and their crudely literal interpretation, do but indicate repressions in the psyche which can be explained with a good deal of plausibility in terms of modern scientific psychology. The 'religion' of the average churchgoer is the product, in fact, of an unsuccessful, and

by no means beautiful, attempt to satisfy a real impulse to righteousness without at the same time forgoing the covert satisfaction of all manner of less noble propensities. The effect of all this is that the nature of that more elevated type of contact with God (necessarily, of course, still vitiated by impurities, though of a less gross order) which unfortunately happens to be described by the same name, is continually being obscured. And this, I may say here, is a matter in which rationalists are not altogether free from blame. For it is to be observed that when writers like, for instance, Mr Wells, Mr Bernard Shaw, or Mr Bertrand Russell wish to exhibit the wretchedly limited character of the religious attitude, we never find them attacking the beliefs of such people as Coleridge, Newman, Eucken, or Prof. Otto. Instead, they are content to secure a cheap victory by throwing stones through the windows of the Little Bethel at the end of the street.

Enough, however, of general considerations. What I wish to do here is to indicate the relationship of the religious consciousness to the problem of social reconstruction. I regard it as being of the most intimate possible nature. Our need, as I have insisted throughout this book, is that of beginning again at the beginning. The process entails, before everything, a concentration on the facts of the inner life. And this concentration, again, only fully achieves its object when the individual, after passing through that period of spiritual chaos which is the immediate result of looking resolutely for the first time into his own depths, has at last attained to the point of realizing the true significance of the personal life. This final stage is not, in my estimation, to be achieved without something in the nature of a mystical experience. For it is difficult to see by what other agency a person can be brought to understand the principle—altogether incomprehensible to the purely rationalistic type of mind—that

the infinite is to be contacted most effectively in the most limited of situations. Such notions as that we can realize God most completely by a concentration on the most immediate and homely issues in life; that as a result of such concentration we can attain to a deeper vision of the spiritual laws of existence than any which we can gain otherwise; that in labouring in obscurity and isolation at our personal regeneration we are contributing to the transformation of social life in the most effective possible manner—these ideas can never come to dominate a man's mind to any marked degree until his depths have been stirred by something in the nature of a vision of the divine.

Such, at least, is my personal interpretation of the situation. It will be repugnant, I am aware, to a wide range of minds. But whether it is justified or not—and I will make no attempt to defend it here—I would submit that it will have to be conceded that in very many respects an attack on the solution of the social problem from the mystical angle is immeasurably more effective than any which can be made upon it from that of rationalism and science. I will now explain why I hold this view.

Let me begin by recalling that the whole outer complexion of the social organism depends on the way in which men and women treat the most humble and apparently negligible details in their lives. The wider issues of politics, history, and economics are determined in the end by the seemingly trivial happenings in a myriad domestic circles. That progression of events which we are compelled for the purposes of thought to picture to ourselves in terms of a sequence of major and minor crises and turning points is but the ultimate expression of the action taken by an infinity of minds in dealing with the most localized and transitory of problems. To the realistic thinker those happenings in the life of men and societies which are writ sufficiently large to be susceptible of treatment by the historian, the economist, or the sociologist are

in a sense of secondary importance. What he attends to by preference are the more subtle and intimate types of contact between human minds. For he is aware that that invisible process by which the spiritualizing of the world is insensibly being accomplished will only be accelerated to any perceptible degree when individuals come to concentrate primarily upon deflecting the course of apparently unimportant events in the light of their appreciation of points which are too subtle in character to exist for any but a sensitive understanding. It is at this stage, and not at that when the charter is signed, the assembly dissolved, the edict finally promulgated, that history can strictly speaking be said to be in process of manufacture.

The point is one which has always appeared to the intuitive thinker as being of the very first importance. He knows that the smallest details are, in their way, just as significant as the rest of life, that nothing can be passed over with impunity, that to build squarely you must take into consideration even what appear to be the most incon siderable facts. It is not merely a question of watching the straws to see which way the wind is blowing. It is rather that he is aware that all creative activity must in the end be based on perfecting the minor situation, on concentrating primarily on what is at hand rather than hurrying off into a world of stimulating, but remote, considerations. It is the 'imponderables' which count, which, in the end, determine the progression of the calculable, palpable events.

Regarded subjectively, this refusal to pass over the details expresses itself in a continual exercise of the judgment to an extent which would appear excessive to the average man. Everybody, of course, realizes that in the lives of each one of us there come moments at which we are faced with one of those momentous decisions—of the type of 'A Girl's Cross Roads'—which have always so appealed to the popular imagination. Yet to anybody

who looks at the matter more carefully it becomes evident that the 'dramatic' decisions with which the playwright works are often less significant than they appear to be on the surface. The alternatives which are presented may be clear-cut enough, but that breathless wavering between them which is so exciting for the spectator is often very largely functionless. We are contemplating the resultants of forces which have now passed out of the individual's power of manipulation; he is carried to safety or perdition by the accumulated momentum of an infinity of preliminary minor decisions. We watch anxiously to see whether the bridge will be swept away by the rising flood, but the result has already been determined by the skill and solidity with which it was built.

The attitude of the realistic psychologist is, I think, very much that of the person who is more interested in the original right fixing of the bolts, nuts, and plates of the structure than in speculating regarding its behaviour under a strain. The vital battles are fought in solitude and over what to the naturalistically minded appear to be trivial issues. The whole trend of the teaching of religion is in the direction of this deciding aright hour by hour, this 'dying daily.' In every problem, however local, there is a choice offered between a superior and an inferior solution. As we realize this fact our moral consciousness becomes more and more uninterrupted. Certain occasions for decision remain, of course, more vital than others—and decisions as to which of them is which are perhaps the most difficult of all those with which we have to deal—but the least of them means more to us than it did previously. We run the risk, it is true, of developing an unhealthy sensitiveness to alternatives, a morbid conscientiousness, or a diseased hyperæsthesia, but we find it worth while to expose ourselves to these dangers for the sake of the enhanced sense of existence which is derived from dealing with life at the roots. Moreover, the recluse

who enters the arena of worldly affairs with a series of these unseen and unpretentious victories to his credit is almost certain of success in those more stagey conflicts which appeal to the mob.

There is a further aspect of the mystical element in experience which is of no small significance. I refer to the way in which it provides the individual who is sensitive to its existence with a means of spiritualizing, not only certain selected aspects of his life, but the whole of it. He is offered the possibility of absolutely unremitting participation in the work of redeeming the world, and through this fact he is relieved from all those opportunities for ennui, vexation, and idleness which serve to take the bloom off existence for the ordinary man. When a person has once concentrated his powers on self-discipline, has established some degree of contact with a Centre from which he is free at all times to derive power and illumination, every experience in his life becomes related to a creative purpose. He finds that every little duty, every casual social contact, every check to his personal plans and ambitions, provides him with a means of deepening his knowledge of the spiritual principles which underlie life, of acquiring a knowledge of vital facts instead of abstract conclusions, of developing his powers in relation to actualities. By paying attention in this manner to the host of trivial events which he had before carelessly passed over, he further becomes aware of the superficial and mechanical nature of the rationalistic system of ideas, for he begins to see how things hang together on that deeper level of life which exists only for the person who is able to watch the inner movements of the men and women he encounters with a certain concern. It is true that he is liable at times to become oppressed by the strain of such continuous adaptation; but he is rewarded by the fact that as he develops in this direction he is able more and more to see apparently

trivial and meaningless events in the light of wide and illuminating principles.

Whoever, therefore, is occupied with the problems of the inner life in anything but a theoretic way is distinguished from the majority of men by the continuous nature of his consciousness. By this I mean that he is attempting *all the time* to shape life into beautiful and significant form. The ordinary person is very far from doing this. Most of us live in a sort of psychological murk relieved only by the few bright spots at which we achieve to some degree a realization of the possibilities of the occasion. Our attention is focussed on certain definite points—our ‘interests,’ as we call them. During the period in which we are not alert in this manner we leave our lives just lying about, uncared for. The characteristically modern man concentrates his attention on a few chosen points. He is too busy with his ‘activities’ to have any time left for rendering his personal style, his home, his social relationships, really appropriate to his individuality. He never looks attentively at the things and persons he comes across in the course of the day; he glares only at fixed objectives.

Such an arbitrary limitation of the natural field of man’s creative labour is responsible for particularly pernicious effects in the sphere of social reform. For all those people who approach this task from the rationalistic angle slip insensibly into the habit of measuring the work done for the redemption of the world in terms of the indulging by people in limited, clearly defined ‘activities’ which are directed to some obvious end. What is still worse, they are driven to conclude further that the social work which they are thus doing is of more importance than that which is being performed all the time ubiquitously and invisibly by all sorts of people who are devoting their energies, not to the study of eugenics or economics, but merely to becoming a little less selfish, hard-hearted, or

uncharitable. The fact is altogether lost sight of that it is such minute and unperceived changes within the human psyche which in their accumulation serve to determine the total character of society. The process, if invisible, is not less potent. But it is very far from being of an order which appeals to the typical modern intellectual, who is eager always for immediate and conclusive results. Naturalism can only recognize the operation of spiritual forces in terms of the more obvious manifestations which they finally produce on the material plane.

4

The effect of all this on the psychology of the 'social reformer' is disastrous. In contrast to the mystic of whom I have spoken above, he passes his existence in a world which only offers him possibilities of self-expression at a small number of unfortunately disposed points. While he is actually labouring for the particular cause to which he has devoted himself his spirit—if he is not yet awake to the element of unreality in his activity—may enjoy some degree of serenity. But during those necessarily extended periods of time in which he is not actively at work he is confronted by an alien and oppressive universe. For owing to the sceptical and rationalistic temper of his mind—he would not otherwise be found in that particular *galère*—he is incapable of appreciating the exquisite creative possibilities in *all* contacts and situations. On the contrary, as he himself sees the matter, he is at every moment on one side or the other of a rigidly delimited frontier, either helping to reform the world, or doing nothing that can be regarded, in terms of his own philosophy, as being of particular importance. The consequence is that he is always being 'interfered with,' called upon by Fate to occupy himself with tasks which he is unable to bring into relation with his sovereign aim.

And when he is thus, as it were, cut off from his base, he becomes irritated, dejected, or merely perplexed, the inhabitant of a world which is perpetually presenting itself to him as being hostile, meaningless, or overpoweringly dreary in nature. He has no true internal stability, but alternates continually between the dangerous excitement of working for an abstract aim, and the depression which is awakened in him through contemplating the features of a world which appears even more ugly and sordid to him than it does to others, because that process by which it is everlastingly being spiritually leavened is hidden from his gaze.

We cannot escape the conclusion: If the regeneration of society is ever to be successfully accomplished, the whole man must be involved in the enterprise. For all that the over-educated individual of to-day may assert to the contrary, the fact remains that that indirect approach to human experience which is involved in the greater part of social science and active social reform entails the starvation of a whole side of our nature. Art and religion at their highest satisfy us because they never present us with an abstract idea in its nakedness, but invariably with the embodiment of that idea in living and tangible form. And the profound and altogether unparalleled satisfaction which we derive from either contemplating art productions or creating them ourselves should afford any person possessing the slightest degree of imagination with a sufficiently straightforward indication of the nature of that type of social reform which is alone really consonant with the constitution of man. No method of improving social conditions will ever appeal to the imagination of the great masses of the world unless in practice it involves for the individual a concern with familiar and immediate things. For by a deep instinct he insists that there shall be as small a divorce as possible between the object of his thought and the impressions—ininitely precious

from the point of view of solving the problem really fundamentally—which he is receiving through his physical senses in the course of his daily life. And this circumstance does not come about, as the sociologists fondly imagine, simply because people are by disposition insufficiently serious to be induced to study technical monographs and treatises. It comes about, rather, because they are aware in a deep place in their consciousness that both the scientific study of human relationships and the activity of the average social reformer are somehow beside the real point. This realization is no less significant for being in most cases extremely vague. For it involves a recognition of the sovereign principle that the vital situation for the individual is that which is presented to him in the shape of his daily transactions with the other human beings in his immediate circle.

It is on this plane, the plane of the concrete and palpable, that the real battlefield is seen to be situated. And the doctrinaire type of social reformer should be made to understand as clearly as possible that it is on this plane alone that people of flesh and blood will ever be induced to fight. True enough, they are perpetually making every possible effort to forsake it for the shadowy and alluring realm of the abstract—as the writings of the social reformers themselves indicate eloquently enough. But if their roots go down sufficiently deep into the substance of life they find that their deepest satisfaction lies in bringing their most profound aspirations and passions into intimate relation with the objects which are before their eyes, there beneath their hands. They know that if they occupy themselves too long with abstract and unreal problems they will pay for the fact by a distressing sense of emptiness, internal poverty and estrangement from life. And here there is once more apparent the wisdom of the enlightened religious teacher, who insists all the time on bringing the individual back to the

nearest and the most domestic of tasks. For by performing them in a right spirit, the man brings the whole of himself—body, soul and spirit—to bear upon those objects in the world with which he has the most intimate acquaintance. Indeed, it may be said that it is only in such circumstances that he is dealing with the facts with which he is completely conversant—the prerequisite of all truly creative activity. More important still, he is doing so in safety, for he is passing into the region of the infinite by way of the only portal through which man can safely proceed—that which is constituted by objects which are both definite and vividly present to his apprehension.

A final point. It is only by thus transferring the centre of activity to the personal life that moral behaviour can ever be transformed into a delight. Thanks to the labours of generations of academic thinkers, ethics and morality have become associated in our minds with probably the most arid and otiose speculations for which the human mind has ever been responsible—an endless series of discussions centring round a 'good' which exists in undisturbed majesty in a perfect and impermeable vacuum. Such people, with their unimaginative insistence on rigid and abstract principles, on passive conformity to an unsympathetic type of moral law, on our obligation to perform a particularly dreary sort of work, have positively invited the outbreak of a Dionysian revolution. For they have done their best to divorce goodness and beauty from that delight which comes from a contemplation of the exquisite and ever-changing flow of life between men and women. The charms of altruism will never be brought home to the mass of mankind until the labour of perfecting the world is presented to them as being an exciting occupation. And for this state of things to come about such labour must be conceived of as taking the form of immediate transactions between living human beings.

SCIENCE AND THE MODERN MIND

I

My particular object in writing this book, it will be recalled, is that of endeavouring to assist the imaginative and sensitive, but also suggestible, person in the task of recognizing the significance of his immediate instincts and intuitions, and in resisting at the same time the appeal of systems of ideas which, plausible and 'scientific' as they present themselves as being, are in reality the indirect expression of an inferior type of perception. The people, in fact, to whom these pages are addressed are precisely those who are sufficiently intuitive to be rendered uneasy and dissatisfied by the ordinary kind of thinking which is being indulged in on the subject of social problems, but who are, nevertheless, not very clear as to the nature of the ground on which they themselves are taking their stand.

The first stage of the enquiry on which we are at present engaged took the form of an investigation into the limitations of the methods of modern sociology. We then found ourselves obliged to consider at some length the general nature, the presuppositions, and the more obvious possibilities of the intuitive attitude to experience. Now that the intuitive type of reader (for whom alone, I must repeat, this book is written) has, perhaps, acquired some additional confidence in the validity of his own point of view, and is now (I hope) less inclined to be intimidated by the conclusions arrived at by Science in this particular field, I propose, in what follows, to resume my analysis of current sociological thought. This time, however, I shall approach the question more from the psychological angle, and I will begin with that conflict in the modern consciousness to which I have referred above.

There are large numbers of people to be found at the present day who are more or less clearly aware of the existence of certain 'values' which tend to be ignored by rationalistic thought. Yet they are at the same time deeply respectful to the orthodox manner of approaching the problem. The result is conflict—a conflict between two different systems of relationships, which are perceived by two different modes of the mind. And the task for the intuitive type of person to-day is that of holding on to his immediate intuitive perceptions without permitting himself to be mesmerized by the conclusions of those thinkers who are proceeding by leaving intuition out of account. That task is no light one. He is obliged to establish a novel series of associations at a time when his mind is still dominated to an extreme degree by that other series of a less fundamental order which he has acquired by tradition, habit, and education. He is compelled to a painful and extensive disassociation of his existing ideas. For to the extent that he acquires inner vision he is led to connect phenomena together in a different fashion from that in which they are associated by less imaginative minds.

One of the chief obstacles in the way of such emancipation is the ascendancy which has been gained in the course of the last few decades by 'scientific thought.' We have learned, in connection with certain questions, to think in a particular, highly specialized way, with a precision and detachment unknown to our ancestors. The results in the appropriate field have been gratifying enough. But at the same time we have acquired just through that specialization a certain mental twist which has a deleterious effect upon our thinking on other and more vital themes.

Very few of us, I think, realize the extent to which we are all imbued with the scientific spirit in dealing with life. It is so much a part of the air we breathe that we have hardly any consciousness that we are perpetually

absorbing it. Yet it penetrates our mental life in the most intimate possible manner. Our very vocabulary is becoming more and more filled with terms which have been evolved for the purpose of mechanizing life. Function, activity, agency, reaction, standardize, organize, stimulus : it is words of this abstract, dehumanized, metallic type which we employ with ever-increasing frequency. It is true that we have not yet reached the point when we are all of us technicians ourselves. But we have each an acute consciousness of the technician lurking somewhere in the background. We have unanimously accepted the principle that there is absolutely no limit to the field of scientific enquiry. Everything, we realize, is now fair game for the scientist, no matter how 'sacred' or intimate it may appear to be. Everything is susceptible of being treated impersonally, systematically, scientifically, whether it is voice production, emigration, or the conflicts within the human soul. And even in attempting to solve our little personal problems we do our best not to 'muddle through,' but to introduce something of the clinical spirit. Of course, we are not able to do very much in this direction. But, nevertheless, we find ourselves stating the question in general terms and regarding it as a particular example of a type situation or as illustrated by principles which have been elaborated as the result of research by trained investigators. Our bias, in fact, in considering any problem is towards, in some way or other, 'looking it up' in the appropriate book—in a word, to solving it by an appeal to vicarious experience. We are always mentally calling in the specialist. Deep down in the minds of all of us there lies the conviction that the growth of scientific research has rendered all our little personal judgments terribly amateurish. Even when we are dealing with the psychology of the members of our own family, there looms before us the figure of the expert who would restate our homely diagnoses in terms of internal secretions or

transformations of the libido. In our modern society the scientist is beginning to occupy the position which was once filled by the medieval confessor.

The confidence which the intelligentsia are placing in the conclusions of the scientists is, however—as far, at least, as purely human problems go—largely misplaced. The body of scientific knowledge to which the educated person so naturally turns for enlightenment is derived from the study of a certain limited kind of data, data which have been selected for examination without attention being paid to the principles which that examination involves. What must now be discussed is the pernicious effect of this development of scientific study upon the growth in people's minds of another and a deeper type of interest in man and society.

What is the matter with us moderns is that, to the extent to which we are in the least intellectual, we are dominated by a system of ideas of the most grossly mechanical character. The *esprit géométrique* has triumphed over the *esprit de finesse*. We are slaves to what I would venture to term horizontal as opposed to vertical thinking. Consider, for example, the case of a young man who is studying some subject like economics, anthropology, or social science at one of our universities. What is the nature of the education which he is receiving? He is acquiring, more than anything, the capacity to manipulate with great flexibility a certain limited type of information—the information which is available to purely intellectual interest. He becomes expert at relating to one another the outside, unilluminating, mechanical aspects of an enormous number of things, with no one of which he has any profound, interior acquaintance. There is an abnormal development of the discursive intelligence, but practically none of that penetrative vision which could alone give him a sight of the essences of objects and processes. The nature of a situation is never permitted to

disengage itself slowly and persuasively before his receptive mind. Instead, he is perpetually passing on. He is encouraged to pounce on one superficial feature of an object and plot its distribution all over the earth. The world is becoming filled with people with these overheated, strident minds which, like demented calculating machines, are for ever engaged in adding up, subtracting, and dividing figures which express realities with which they have no immediate acquaintance. And the person who can 'handle' information of this type with the greatest dexterity is the one who carries off the honours. Yet what could be more pernicious than this overfeeding of the reason at the expense of the intuitions, this combination of a misplaced knowledgeableness about the labour conditions in Peru with an almost total blindness to the living movements in the men and women with whom the person is brought into contact in the routine of daily life? The result, of course, is a mountain of dead constataions, irrelevant to any vital purpose.

The same sort of thing goes on in a less intense form among people who are educating themselves outside universities. In fact, it is almost impossible for anyone to-day to interest himself in modern problems at all without becoming to some extent involved in this mechanical system of ideas. And this comes about for the most comprehensible reason. All people who know what it is to be alive, to love, and to suffer, naturally seek to gain all the light they can on the problems of life. This in the twentieth century means that they read a large number of books. The spirit of the age being what it is, these books are, for the most part, written by specialists, and written from the scientific point of view. Recourse to 'authorities' is, in fact, almost inevitable. Owing to the enormous number of facts which are being accumulated to-day on all sides, it is altogether impossible for the ordinary person to study more than one or two subjects directly himself.

For the rest he relies on the expert, who hands him over his results, usually fairly and lucidly summarized. The intellectual person then proceeds to relate these results to conclusions which have been reached by other experts, or even consults a further expert on this very question of relating them. Thus is his picture of the world built up. If he is a person whose mind is at all weak, he may end by making an unsuccessful attempt to live by a synthesis of New Thought, Psycho-analysis, Eugenics, and Behaviourism; there are thousands of people in the world to-day whose heads are filled with equally monstrous combinations of ideas. If, on the other hand, he is at all talented, he may become highly expert at manipulating these variegated mental counters without becoming confused in the process. But in either case the whole business is that of perpetually balancing up what is almost entirely the experience of other people.

2

There are several features of this preoccupation with clockwork ideas which are particularly disastrous. In the first place, the person is very easily led to ignore the existence of those facts which are *not* referred to by the 'authorities.' For he becomes so dazzled by the superficial glitter and consistency of the ideas which he is assimilating that he is rendered blind to the much more important elements in the situation which these thinkers so suavely leave out of account. It is not only that the scientists are silent about all sorts of aspects of life which they are either unable to deal with by the methods which they adopt or simply do not consider to be of importance. More misleading is their silence about their silence. It is not a deliberate silence; but it is none the less mischievous. What they are all the time showing you is one of those sectional bookcases which are always full. Or, better,

they confront you with the black squares of a chess-board, each one of which is filled with a multitude of entertaining facts. You find the spectacle extremely interesting and move bishop-wise about the board with exhilarating freedom. It is true that they are careful to point out that several of the squares have at present to be left blank. But they make no allusion to the fact that you are being presented with only one-half of the truth. And the person who is able to see the missing white squares finds it very difficult to convince them of their existence.

Most people, indeed, have a much sharper eye for mis-statements than they have for incomplete descriptions. A direct lie stings them into a consciousness that something is wrong; a true, but partial, statement soothes the mind just by its apparently exhaustive nature. When we listen to one of these superficially satisfying accounts of the matter in hand, it is as if we are being escorted on a little circular tour of inspection and finally deposited, tired but relieved, at the door of our house. When we are then told that in reality we have only been shown less than half the truth, we find the fact rather incredible; only the more persistent of us are disposed to explore the terrain all over again. It is to this danger of too facile satisfaction that people are now being exposed by the nightmare development of statistical methods of investigation. So much is being found out, so many apparently remote manifestations are being related to one another, the 'material' is being heaped up at such a pace that it is not surprising that we tend to forget the infinitely more numerous and unspeakably more significant facts about which statistics are inevitably silent. It is true that the facts which are gathered together with this ant-like industry are usually fairly accurate and collected by people who have the best intentions. But it should be pointed out to everyone who studies them that together they give a hopelessly incomplete picture of the true

position—of that position with which we need to be familiar if we are to *act* with any safety. From this point of view a book like Mr and Mrs Sidney Webb's *Socialist Commonwealth*, based on the results of research along these lines, is not only surprisingly premature, but an insult to the perceptions which we all possess of the real and infinitely complicated facts of life.

We must also consider the effect upon the individual of living by the light of a collection of second-hand abstract ideas which never perfectly fit any given set of circumstances. The weak-headed, of course, get into a terrible mess. What instincts they have left tell them obstinately that there is something dead and repulsive about the glib conclusions so confidently put forward by the economists, the psychologists, and the social scientists. But they cannot say exactly where the deficiency lies. The arguments to which they listen appear to be cogent and logical. And yet . . . Such unfortunates are being slowly stifled in the atmosphere which has been produced by our deplorably one-sided, predominatingly mental interest in life. They are entangled in a web—a web spun by the head working without the heart. The mind, the function of which is that of ordering experience, has become a sort of monster which over-elaborates the data of consciousness. For the modern man and woman pure experience is becoming more and more difficult. They do not see what is in front of them; they see what ought to be there according to the theories with which their brains are plethoric. On all sides one meets mental cripples, struggling with weak instincts against the lifeless ideas which they have assimilated. The moment anything living rises out of the depths of their being, it is entangled in the octopus-like coils of a system of mechanical generalizations, interpreted in terms of that system of surface associations by which we all are so painfully oppressed.

Almost every young man as he grows up automatically

exchanges his healthy child-consciousness of immediacies for a print-begotten consciousness of abstractions. After reading those terrible books for a few years, he begins to see in terms of theory every psychological situation with which he is presented either in his own life or in that of others. If he finds one day that he would rather stay at home than go to a party, he describes the situation by saying that there is an intra-psychic conflict taking place within him between the herd- and the self-regarding instinct. If he is tempted to lay his head on a woman's lap, he is liable to conceive of the action as a regression to a more infantile mode of activity. And just to the extent that his head is filled with such bunkum will he grow to ignore the subtle and unique points in each experience which serve to make it just what it is.

We do not mind this sort of thing so much in undergraduates. Those deliciously futile debating society arguments which they love so much and in which all the points at issue are purely hypothetical are appropriate enough to the pubertal exuberance of the mind. Subsequent acquaintance with the anfractuosities of the real world usually serves to correct this immaturity. At least, this is what used to be the case. Nowadays, however, it seems that this theorizing undergraduate outlook is being adopted by older people as well, and with deplorable results. Could anything be more heart-breaking than the sight of hundreds of disappointed men and women, serious-minded, but deficient, above all, in the capacity for self-analysis, who are unconsciously seeking to drown their disbelief in the possibilities of life, or their yearning for personal love, by devoting themselves to 'research'? Or the state of mind of the wretched creature whose natural instinctive judgments as to what he needs in order to become whole have been twisted and perverted by the suggestions of some unscrupulous psycho-analyst?

The position of more robust types is little better. Willy-

nilly, simply through being alive, they have forced upon their attention a mass of data which they are not only unable to ignore, but which they feel obscurely to be more important than those derived from the books. The consequence is that if they are at all sensitive they have in their poor, puzzled heads two sets of relationships: one, that surface system of connections evolved by the rationalistic, systematizing part of the mind—the part which loves to manipulate and recombine all the easy, outside facts; and the other a sort of shadow set, rather shamefacedly tolerated, which they cannot help sketching out between all those more subtle facts about life which are apprehended at the expense of love, pain, and passion by the heart. And their distress arises largely from the fact that this second set of relationships is felt by them to be, not simply supplementary to that elaborated on the basis of scientific observation (as it is usually regarded as being by the unreflecting scientist), but substitutive of it. The first of these systems has, of course, a far greater prestige than the other. It is that which is continually being elaborated and added to by professors at universities, it is the staple of ordinary education, and the authority which is invariably appealed to by the ‘tough-minded’ type of thinker. The only disappointing element in it is that it is apt to become so exceedingly uninteresting. . . . The mind—especially the young mind—is satisfied, surfeited, in fact; but the deeper feelings are left untouched. The very condition of all this brilliant versatility is, in fact, that the emotions should not be involved. It is detachment which is to guide us out of the confusion in which we have become involved.

Finally, whether we are concerned with a more or a less independent type of thinker, there is to be considered the appalling starvation of the senses which is involved in this subsistence on abstract and artificial ideas. Only one part of the man is brought into play in dealing with

experience. His life becomes mental to a disastrous degree. The data which he is accumulating in the course of his daily existence remain neglected and unrelated to the ideas with which his brain is filled. More important still, the possibilities of intuition and instinct remain unrealized. There is a fatal divorce between the head and the heart. The situation has been admirably described by Mr D. H. Lawrence in the following passages, both taken from his *Fantasia of the Unconscious*:

An idea which is merely introduced into the brain, and started spinning there like some outrageous insect, is the cause of all our misery to-day. Instead of living from the spontaneous centres, we live from the head. We chew, chew, chew at some theory, some idea. We grind, grind, grind in our mental consciousness, till we are beside ourselves. Our primary affective centres of spontaneous being are so utterly ground round and automatized that they squeak in all stages of disharmony and incipient collapse.

The business of the mind is first and foremost the pure joy of knowing and comprehending, the pure joy of consciousness. The second business is to act as medium, as interpreter, as agent between the individual and his object. The mind should *not* act as a director or controller of the spontaneous centres. These the soul alone must control.

The same point has been stated very well by the late Delsarte (*The Science and Art of Speech and Gesture*, 1927):

At our present stage of development, the powers of mind are more fully developed than those of heart or sense—and unless some very definite means are taken to check this unnatural movement, we shall enter upon an era of scientific atrocities such as the natural man would never conceive.

Artificial education uses a minimum of the senses to instruct the mind, and a maximum of the mind to 'instruct' the senses. Nature's method is exactly the contrary.

It is important that the nature of the situation should

not be misunderstood. What is demanded is not simply that we should supplement our abstract theorizing by the cultivation of our sense-perceptions, balancing, say, the study of semitic philology by eurhythmics, or carving in stone. Such efforts to maintain our equilibrium, desperate as they are, are by no means without value or significance. But they will not take us far. More urgent is it that we should make the most serious effort to let our mental life grow out of our immediate and *total* experience, not out of some small part of it. Our modern ideology owes its shape and content to the fact that the world, as it exists for our consciousness, has been arbitrarily split up into a number of aspects, each of which is examined by itself in no sort of relation to the rest. The consequence is the accumulation of different types of data, each of which is dealt with by a special kind of technique. Thus, we find one class of thinker being philosophical exclusively about the very limited material which is considered appropriate to philosophy, another writing novels on the basis of perceptions which nobody ever thinks of utilizing for any other purpose, a third being scientific exclusively about the data of 'science.' Whereupon still further cerebration is called for to determine the correct relations which should subsist between all these different branches of knowledge.

Naturally the attempt fails, for the reason that our whole conception of the problem is wrong at the root. Our only way out of the difficulty lies in learning to think in a new way, organically, and, as I have already remarked, with due respect to the totality of our experience. A movement in that direction is already to be observed. The increasing tendency among modern thinkers to break down the barriers which divide the different 'subjects' from one another is of great significance. We find to-day mathematical philosophers writing on Religion, divines on sociology, artists on the problem of social organization. All of which is extremely hopeful for the future.

3

There is a sense in which the position of the imaginative person in the dark days of the last century was less unhappy than it is to-day. From one point of view, at any rate, there was less danger for the individual in being bewildered by W. K. Clifford and Herbert Spencer than in being misled by Freud and Jung. Not only did the mechanistic theory yield readily to a little careful analysis—a little knowledge of epistemology went a long way in those days—but it was only a theory about the *totality* of things. Within the iron circle in which it placed you it left you individually free to muse and dream as much as you wished. If Nature *was* ruled by iron laws, there still seemed to be no particular reason why Mr and Mrs Browning should not continue to compose poetry. It was true that every sonnet which they fondly imagined that they were creating by inspiration was in reality a merely automatic reflex of the activity of various material bodies, but so was everything else in life. So the fact ceased to be so important. To-day, however, the position is very different. Science, having failed in its attack on the universe, is concentrating on the individual. We know very well what would happen to Mr and Mrs Browning to-day at the hands of the psycho-analysts and other specialists in treating the soul on scientific lines. Naturalism has become three times as dangerous now that it has appeared on the subjective plane.

Such is the situation with regard to the balance of intuition and reason in the outlook of the modern intellectual. How, it may be asked, has it come about that this one-sidedness has attracted such a small degree of attention? The answer would appear to be that, through a process which will have to be analysed in more detail later, an excessively rigorous division has been established between the field of interest of Science on the one hand

and of Art, Mysticism, Religion—the inner life generally—on the other. The consequence is that no effective criticism from a qualitative angle is ever brought to bear upon the work of people like sociologists, economists, and anthropologists. They exist in a curious world of their own, across the frontiers of which no living spirit is ever allowed to stray. So that on the one hand we have the picture of Mr and Mrs Sidney Webb coolly and carefully elaborating their scheme for a socialist commonwealth, while on the other we find Mr D. H. Lawrence roaring at the incorrigible folly of trying to build up a civilization on the basis of the mind working divorced from the instincts. And there the matter rests. The sociologically minded thinker is almost the last person in the world to read the works of any writers who might be considered likely to give him an idea of the realities of life. Not only is he oblivious of the importance of such things as imaginative work in literature, but he is, it would seem, almost irremediably shut off from ever being made to realize its significance. Deeply rooted in his mind there lies the confused notion that ‘purely subjective impressions’ are uniformly untrustworthy. As a result he is sceptical of any statement of truth which does not appear in the form of statistical tables or of monographs written in that dead, pretentious jargon in which he himself indulges. He therefore dismisses the passionate, feminine, inspired, and confused Mr D. H. Lawrence with a shrug of his shoulders, although it is Mr Lawrence who is dealing with the core of life and he himself who is concerned with its outer shell. In the same way he finds it impossible to take Mr Chesterton seriously in his *Eugenics and Other Evils*, simply because Mr Chesterton, like a true poet, is incapable of talking about living realities except in the language of life, is perpetually giving way to an exuberant fancy and, as a typical intuitive thinker, is always apt to support the right conclusions

by adducing the wrong proofs. Again, what systematic sociologist would go for enlightenment to a work like Oscar Wilde's *Soul of Man under Socialism*? Yet for those who can pierce beneath the paradoxical form of the statement there is to be found in that little volume a view of society which, since it is based upon a true appreciation of the nature of the human organism, is infinitely more valuable than any speculations by an emotionally starved scientist.

On the other hand, those thinkers who are occupied with the deeper aspects of life tend to take the smallest possible interest in the works of, say, Prof. Marshall. A couple of pages of such writing as his is usually enough for them. When confronted with any manifestation in which the deficiency of life and passion is extreme, they simply turn away, bored, depressed, or merely indifferent, and return to the work of expressing positive ideas in their own sphere. A book like Mr Chesterton's is, consequently, an exception to the general rule; it is obviously produced against the grain by a man who was constrained to write it more by a serious concern about a certain danger which is threatening society than by any natural inclination on his part to analyse the nature of negative and misleading notions. And so it goes on. Mr D. H. Lawrence is read by the admirers of Mr D. H. Lawrence, while every new book on sociology which appears is almost invariably reviewed by a person who is so completely steeped in the peculiar atmosphere of 'research' that he is almost incapable of imagining how the ideas which it contains would present themselves to a normal consciousness. In the expressive language of Blake, he is 'connoisseur'd out of his senses.'

It may reasonably be concluded that this state of things is not destined to persist indefinitely. Criticism of the attempt to solve the problems of society on purely rationalistic lines is bound to accumulate at an ever-increasing

pace, and—who knows?—may, perhaps, one day come to a head in the form of the emergence of a definitely new school of thought on social questions. But it will be criticism of a very special order, criticism which, by a curious necessity, must inevitably be made by people who are, strictly speaking, unqualified to indulge in it. For until some genial critic of values comes along we shall be obliged, I am afraid, to put up in this very specialized field with studies which are more suggestive than authoritative in quality. The reason is plain enough: what we are concerned with is a subtle denial of a certain type of experience, of that experience which is limited to those individuals who possess a rather special kind of sensibility, who are, in fact, to some extent artists, mystics, or both. The denial, however, takes the form of a scientific interpretation of the problems of personal and social life which is based, in the ultimate analysis, on leaving the data of this superior perception out of account. Further—and even more important and difficult to combat—we have to deal with the permeation of the general thinking of educated people with the spirit in which this theorizing has been accomplished. It follows that those people who possess the slightest justification for attempting to sort out the hideous mental tangle which has resulted must be qualified to handle both scientific ideas and the fruits of æsthetic and moral perception with nearly equal facility. They must be able to work on both the rational and the intuitive level of consciousness with sufficient expertness for them to be able at least to explain to less fully equipped mortals what manifestations are appropriate to one plane of existence and what to the other. Such persons will necessarily be somewhat difficult to find. Yet they are indispensable if we are ever going to extract ourselves from the naturalistic morass in which we have become engulfed.

THE PERILS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

I

I DEALT in the last chapter with those difficulties in the way of intuitive understanding which have their origin in an unduly submissive attitude to the prevailing rationalistic tendency in sociological thought. For the sake of driving my point home I have ventured in what immediately follows to stray a little further afield and to consider the pernicious influence which is exercised on the mind, not by purely 'scientific' thinking on human problems, but by what can best be described as the 'fixed ideas' which are present in people's minds on the subject of social relationships and the conduct of life. The mental tendency involved remains the same; the only difference is that we shall now be concerned with its operation in a less rigidly delimited field of thought.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to point out that the intellectual life of the great majority of educated people to-day consists very largely in the manipulation of second-hand ideas. Any mental individuality which they possess resides, for the most part, in the uniqueness of the proportions in which various ready-made systems of thought are combined inside their particular heads. The thinking of most of them resolves itself into attempts to see a small selection of imperfectly apprehended biological facts in the light of a set of simplified philosophical principles, of analysing the nature of the conflict between an erroneously conceived Science and an inordinately standardized Religion, of relating a machine-made system of ethics to a not very representative collection of social facts. Such is the nature of the mental world opened up to us by modern education. In a word, we move mentally

about a countryside which is more than liberally provided with roads, canals, telephone and telegraph cables, and of which even the wilder parts are marked on the map as being such.

This fact implies, of course, the possession of genuine privileges. But the enjoyment of them is attended by a very serious danger. Formulated standards not only serve to facilitate the consolidation of experience; they tend to vitiate it as well. When the lines are already laid down, the declivities nicely graded, the curves carefully eased, few individuals can resist the tendency to slide about the subject in luxury, sure always of their destination, and relieved of the trouble of shaping a course for themselves. It is only the original person who finds life on these Model Estates intolerable. He is driven by his honesty and directness of vision to construct a new map, to follow the actual indentations of the coast-line, the path of the stream, the contours of the hill.

Now, what makes the exchange of ideas with the modern educated person such an exhausting and dispiriting business is just the easy familiarity which he displays all the time with the host of ordnance maps which have been drawn up for his benefit by the mental cartographers of the world. He has got into the habit of handling experience exclusively by resorting to the use of a set of abstract and mechanical conceptions which have been evolved, before everything, in the interests of the *esprit géométrique* rather than in those of the *esprit de finesse*. The painful consequence is a positive inability on his part to refrain from flying away from the object of his attention along any one of those pathways of thought which have been traced out by the detached and speculative mind. And even when, as a more original type, he is able to shape a course of his own, it is invariably in the same dimension; he is overpowered by the tradition in which he has been brought up.

This is why the quality of most modern 'intellectual' conversation is so depressing and unreal. Immediately an object is presented to a person's mind he relates it rapidly and ingeniously to an enormous number of others, but this only in terms of its more superficial, tractable characteristics. Abstractions* are compared with further abstractions, situations viewed in the light of theoretical principles, theories confronted with one another *ad infinitum*. The whole discussion remains in the air, for the reason that no single one of the objects under consideration is ever realized imaginatively, intensively, rather than extensively. Very few people to-day are capable of listening to discourse in the way in which a musician listens to the performance of a sonata or a symphony. Their flexible, over-agile minds pounce upon the bare intellectual content

* We must here establish a distinction. In reading current literature one is liable to come across two attitudes towards the process of 'abstraction' which, although they seem on the surface to be sharply opposed, are not, in reality, so divergent as appears to be the case. On the one hand, 'abstract thinking' is defended by the classicist as serving to counter that modern intellectual tendency in which emphasis is laid before everything on the uniqueness of the individual object, on the necessity of seizing upon the experience in its immediacy and realizing its nature before it has been deformed by the action of the mind (see the criticism of Mr Wyndham Lewis in his *Time and Western Man*, and of M. Julien Benda in his *La Trahison des Clercs*). On the other hand, 'abstraction' is repudiated—as is the case in this book (see also *Speculum Mentis*, by R. G. Collingwood, 1924)—by those people who are more than ordinarily conscious of the manner in which the systematizing capacities of the mind can be abused, and of the barren intellectualism which follows as a result. The important point here is that the reader should not hastily conclude that a protest against inordinate abstraction necessarily implies an advocacy of the principle of plunging into the flux of sensation.

of the statement, to the exclusion of the other meanings which it conveys. No image is paused upon long enough for its quality to make a deep impression on the mind. On the contrary, the tendency is always to use it as a point of departure for speculation, theorizing, or surmise, as an excuse, in fact, for establishing still further abstract correlations. We moderns intellectualize our experience to such a dangerous degree that we have almost lost the capacity for recognizing any features of a situation which cannot be conveyed in formal language. We no longer look at life directly, but we look at it remembering to the best of our ability what was said by Prof. A. on the subject of 'social values,' by Prof. B. on 'sublimation,' by Prof. C. on 'the principles of social administration.' Aspects and qualities of objects exist for us only so far as they can be defined.

If, now, we turn from this consideration of the more formal affinities of the object to the consequences of a passionate concentration upon it, we find that we are confronted with a different system of relationships. That is to say, the intuitive type of observer presents it to us as associated with certain processes and movements in life. The important point about these processes and movements is that they are only perceptible to the man of feeling and inspiration; the heart, in a word, is conscious of a different set of affinities from those which are obvious to the head. Further, they are such that they are usually not easily defined; they have to be suggested, evoked. Inwardness, depth, and richness of content are expressed more than anything by the manner rather than the form of the utterance. It is the overtones, as it were, which alone convey the light in which the speaker wishes to present the object. All discourse on the spiritual level thus resolves itself into an appeal to the existence of a system of relationships which, although they can only be analysed with difficulty, are yet seen to exist by anyone

who makes the effort to strain his attention in a certain direction. The truth at issue is such that it has to be grasped by a particular sensitizing of the mind, an act of imaginative projection, an internal movement of sympathy. Taken on the formal level, the statements which are made may appear to be perfunctory or even trivial in character. They must be 'felt into' or hopelessly misunderstood. Nor are they usually susceptible of being paraphrased, analysed, expounded. We are here on the plane of art; a unique combination of gesture, *ordonnance*, and inflexion serves to reveal something which can only be expressed by such a co-ordination. This is supremely true of the more profound passages in the Old and the New Testaments. The more we read them, the more it is borne in upon us that a whole world of inner experience could only have been evoked by the use of this or that conjunction of symbols, and no other.

I should like to explain at this point that in stressing the limitations of formal language I am not merely referring to the difficulties in expression experienced by some group of hyper-sensitive souls collected in a London studio. What I want to make clear rather is that, even for the simplest purposes of social intercourse, words are, and always have been, an extremely unsatisfactory means of communication. Except in the hands of a great artist, they can only be employed effectually for the simplest purposes, for externalizing that small part of our inner experience which can be expressed in this way. As a matter of actual fact, nobody ever attempts to make language alone do the intricate work of conveying his feelings to another. What we do is to pour our complicated feelings into a few of the ready-made verbal vessels which we find to hand, present these to our listener, and hope that we shall be able to help ourselves out by resorting to the use of a set of auxiliary symbols: that is to say, by modulating our voices, manipulating our features,

using our hands and eyes. And his success in comprehending our meaning depends directly on whether he has or has not within him feelings which could be expressed by the use of the same type of gestures. Otherwise we may talk to him until the end of time without making him understand. Once more we come back to the question of intuitive understanding. It is only our intuitions which will help us in reading these auxiliary symbols, which will enable us to differentiate between two statements which, although verbally identical, are completely different in import. To watch people with concern and patience is to be made aware of the fact that they are continually being obliged to use the same set of overworked symbols for the expression of myriads of evasive and evanescent feelings. Insight pierces the outer form and goes straight to the inner condition which it has divined within. Conversely, it is useless to plead merely verbal accuracy when we are confronted with a person capable of penetrating the outer form. 'Have pity on me,' says Lubov to Trofimov in *The Cherry Orchard*. 'You know,' Trofimov answers, 'I sympathize with all my soul.' 'Yes,' Lubov replies, 'but it ought to be said differently, differently. . . .' The point is that had Trofimov's sympathy been genuine he would probably have employed the same words. A sensitive person would know the difference between the two statements instantly.

And here, perhaps, we may gain a glimpse of the limitations of intellectualism. Nothing, of course, is more desirable than that we should make every possible effort to define the meaning of our terms. But, on the other hand, the fact should be emphasized that the value of such definition decreases rapidly with the interiority of the experience with which we are concerned. To the extent that we have to do with the more material aspects of existence—with what can be characterized broadly as

Nature—accuracy is an attainable quantity: the statement that I am writing these words in a room thirteen feet by twelve, four miles north-north-east of a certain railway station conveys, for example, a meaning which is generally intelligible. But when, on the other hand, I attempt to convey to others the nature of experience of a more intimate order, I become involved in considerable difficulties. For that which I am feeling is necessarily ineffable; all that I can hope to do is, at the best, to communicate something of its quality by the use of certain generalized symbols. And the value of the resulting statement will lie precisely in the peculiar inwardness and richness which I contrive to infuse into the abstract terms which I employ. Just in so far as such terms convey a meaning which is common to everybody—in so far, that is to say, as they are still on the plane in which they exist in the dictionary—they are unilluminating, without potency or interest. They only come alive when they are individualized and coloured by passage through a given mind in a given conjuncture. What is involved when a writer is attempting to express himself is a unique situation: the illuminating power of his words lies in the fact that they are used by him at a certain time and in a certain context. The meaning of every term on which a serious writer lays weight must be taken in relation to the total impression of the production in which it occurs. For just as, on the one hand, that total impression is produced through his use of a succession of isolated words, so, on the other, is the significance of each of those words determined by the meaning of the whole. Unless we are working on the plane of pure science, logic, or philosophy, no procedure could be more fruitless than that of tearing a word out of its *emotional* context (the scrupulousness of intellectualism with regard to the logical context is not here enough) and comparing it with some other term which has been treated in the same unsympathetic fashion.

In a word, the terms of spiritual discourse are subordinate to the end which is achieved by the whole. Intellectualism, by interpreting terms on their lowest level—that of their mutual convertibility—is doing violence to the most precious element in the experience. And here the tremendous function of sympathy becomes once more apparent. In so far as I am able to project myself within the other person, his terms become transparent to my gaze. I learn the nature of his personal symbolism, and even if—as is usually the case with the uneducated—it represents a positive perversion of the normal language of discourse, I understand what he is attempting to convey. And until men learn, in listening to others, to look *firstly* at the word as it is used by the individual in a given set of circumstances, and only *secondly* at the significance which it possesses on the plane of ordinary interpretation, they will never learn to see one another as they are.

But what is, perhaps, most important about words and gestures is what they convey unknown to those who use them. In telling us the way, a man may innocently reveal to us the fact that he is an atheist, a potential fanatic, a sensualist, or a criminal. More than that, he can awaken in our minds by his style of enunciation, his stance or form of address, a consciousness of the existence of all sorts of subtle relationships in life which might otherwise escape our attention. To the man of superior sensibility men and women speak with an eloquence which they are far from suspecting themselves; by the set of their features, their movements and glances, they indicate the direction in which are flowing those invisible creative forces which eventually express themselves in terms of outer events. The truth about human beings and their relationships can never be stated in words; it can only be revealed, shown. For the discerning observer the important facts—important even if mostly undefinable—are there before

his eyes. But they are to be deduced only from a study of the instinctive movements of men and women, movements of which they are largely unconscious themselves. It is these facts in their accumulation which point to what is actually happening, what is about to come into outer manifestation, what is living, moribund, dead, in a person's heart. Only the sensitive artist can see the facts; only the man of insight can interpret them.

2

But at the present juncture in the development of the European consciousness we are confronted, not only with those problems which must always attend the inadequacy of the spoken or the written word, but with certain difficulties of a peculiar type. With the imperceptible but steady shifting of the focus of our attention from the more exterior to the more interior aspects of existence there arises in our minds ever more insistently the demand for the creation of a new set of symbols. Those thousands of people all over the world in whose minds there is awakening a consciousness of a *Zusammenhang* between phenomena which is both different from, and yet more simple than, that evolved as the result of the ordinary type of attention, find themselves, when they are called upon to explain to others the nature of this new vision of life, reduced to an embarrassing impotence. They have something urgent to say, and they find that the words at their disposal are either insufficient or hopelessly cheapened by cynical or insensitive usage. They are forced to choose between the jargon developed by modern psychology, the limited and technical vocabulary of theology, incomprehensible to the majority, or a reversion to that plain, earnest language into which the profound feelings of the divines of the seventeenth century so naturally flowered, and which is now becoming

almost equally unintelligible to the mass of educated people.

Our vocabulary, like that of any other community, is the product of our interest. It is highly developed, but in two directions only. On the one hand we have a magnificent collection of terms which have been designed to facilitate the process of dealing with experience on the purely intellectual level—the vocabulary of the *esprit géométrique*. On the other there lies to hand the most elaborate conceivable mechanism for describing varieties of sensation. There are to-day practically no varieties of physical and psychic feeling which have not been recorded in words somewhere by one or other of our talented modern writers. The precise impression which is made upon one by the sight of one's own blood, or of somebody else's vomit; the curious feeling that one has in looking down a lift shaft; the subtle associations evoked by an empty tin of sardines, a clinical thermometer, an artificial eye—these and a myriad other similar reactions have been set down on paper with such accuracy that one is simply astonished to discover that language can be teased into conveying such extraordinary subtleties of feeling.

The consequence of all this is that immediately one of our sophisticated moderns is confronted with the task of conveying to others the nature of some situation of a less trivial order than that with which he is normally concerned he finds himself almost inarticulate. Directly he leaves that level of glib, well-oiled surface associations on which most of us live, he finds that he must communicate his experience by the use of terms which are only comprehensible to those who are in a position to interpret them with insight. He finds himself compelled to use language which is at once eloquent to those who already know to some extent what he is talking about, and far-fetched and ridiculous to those who do not. Such

is the penalty which has to be paid for the deepening of the consciousness in the midst of a period of naturalistic thought.

But the difficulty does not turn only upon the deficiencies in our vocabulary of spiritual terms. Anybody who is beginning to realize the different way in which things hang together when seen from a more central position than the ordinary, becomes more and more conscious of the fact that, directly you turn people's minds to certain questions, they persist in moving about them along the easy lines which have been traced for them by education and habit. The other lines are there for them if they will but learn to look in a certain way. The position is very much the same as with those puzzle pictures by which one used to be diverted when a child. Once make the necessary adjustment, and you can see that the picture of the forest is also one of Julius Cæsar. Or, again, it is as with those diagrams which are at present so much occupying the attention of certain German psychologists: they represent a receding perspective or an embossed surface, as it suits you to conceive them.

Those people who are interested in conveying to others the nature of this other *Zusammenhang* between objects—that, to put it roughly, of which the heart is more conscious than is the head—find themselves eventually impelled to pierce in some way or other to a point in the reader's mind which lies below the level on which his experience is organized in the lifeless style for which modern education, in its widest sense, is responsible. Or rather, they strive to prevent the minds of their listeners from handling the subject of discussion in the familiar way, to prevent the situation being described in terms of the old notation. Such people are, I think, very much in the position in which a modern chemist would find himself if he were called upon to explain the behaviour of acids and bases to a person who carried in his head the

pre-Daltonian system of classification. The problem is to get people to think in a new way, just as Einstein is compelling them to think in a new way in the field of physics.

The ideas which make up the content of most people's minds are connected to one another by a system of ligaments, the greater number of which can only be severed with a considerable amount of difficulty. They are grouped round certain centres, and can only be withdrawn from their vicinity at the cost of overcoming a resistance similar to that experienced in removing an armature from the field of a powerful magnet. The nature of the means which have served to bring about this particular distribution of their concepts; the relation of this distribution to that which is created by a more intuitive type of interest in life; the causes which normally make for the shifting of an individual's perspective from one layer to the other; the number and nature of the concepts which are common to both systems; the way in which this process of transition presents itself to the person who is experiencing it; the part played by passion and love in bringing it about—these are questions which could only be dealt with adequately in a whole series of volumes. All that I can hope to do within the framework of this book is to adduce a few representative examples of the sort of problem which tends to arise in connection with what I have described as intuitive living.

3

What strikes one most about the ordinary educated person of to-day is the obstinate nature of his ideas regarding *what ought to go with what*. Analyse his mental reactions, and you will discover that he is all the time making the most violent assumptions as to the consonance of certain ideas with others. His mind is dominated by a

preconceived system of probabilities. The directions in which his expectancy is turned are strictly limited. He can only recognize certain types of pictures when they are in certain types of frames. People expect truth, light, inspiration, to come from certain regions which they have fixed upon as being important: research on the part of trained students, books appearing in a certain format, the conversation of certain educated people. They are unable to deal with a deep observation which is planted in the midst of a mass of indisputable rubbish, with a criticism which comes from an individual who ought not, according to all the rules, to be in a position to furnish it, with a hint regarding the deeper nature of things which is embodied in the workings of some little domestic situation. But if people are really going to turn their attention to intuitive values, they will have to be prepared to receive truth in unfamiliar forms and in unexpected connections. Once again, the essential thing about this other way of looking at life is that the ordinary scheme of relationships becomes broken up.

And here, perhaps, I may touch upon the most outstanding difference between that knowledge regarding men and women which is amassed by the sociological investigator and that which grows out of the type of concern with them of which I have been speaking: the circumstances in which it is acquired. The orthodox scientist seeks, as we have seen, to discover valuable information about people by asking them questions, questions which he has framed himself in accordance with his ideas of what is representative or illuminating, and which he poses when he wishes and in the manner he wishes to the individuals whom he has selected for the purpose. He hopes that in this way he will learn important truths about their characters, minds, and habits. For will he not in this way be conducting what he would describe in his own language as 'controlled experiments,'

be collecting his material under the most clinical of conditions?

But it is not the habit of Life to yield up her secrets about the human soul to such systematic enquiry. There comes into play that principle to which I have continually referred in these pages—the principle that the knowledge which is alone worth having must be paid for. The fact is that in this way, this sanitary, orderly, consistent way, there is to be learned little which can throw any great light on the problems of life. For real illumination it is necessary to dive deeper. And this diving deeper consists in going, at whatever cost, to the place where true knowledge is to be found, in learning things, in a word, in circumstances into which one cannot penetrate except at the cost of self-sacrifice. What is really worth knowing about men and women is learned from them *on their own terms*, not on those laid down by the investigator. The deepest truths about the human heart are embodied in, or deducible from, statements which are volunteered by people who are engaged, if I may so put it, in being what they are at their own time and their own place. You may ask men a thousand questions out of a disinterested desire to extend your knowledge of psychology or economics, but you will not learn from the answers to all of them put together anything which is worth a hundredth part of what you will get from them when they are responding to a sympathy which they divine in your breast. And you must pay for the privilege of this moment, not only by a real concern for them, but by developing the human understanding that will alone enable you to divine their interior condition, which is reflected in their bearing, their manner of address, the changing expression on their faces. Such signs are only to be interpreted by the tender-hearted and the wise.

It was by this painful and exquisitely delicate type of observation that Dostoevsky, one of the greatest psycho-

logists that Europe has ever produced, obtained his knowledge of the human heart. Throughout years of his life he spent a great part of his time amongst the lowest type of social outcasts which Russia produced. He did not 'study' them or 'cultivate relations' with them; he watched them with an interest which was inextricably bound up with his love for humanity; he looked into their twisted hearts with pity, wonder, and terror. That is why he discovered things about men and women which no other author has ever set down on paper, and which make one of his pages worth more to anyone who understands the nature of human problems than a pile of volumes by scientific psychologists. Only what is revealed out of love to love can ever really illuminate experience. And this illumination is derived more than anything from looking at objects which have not been selected beforehand for examination, but to which one's eyes are drawn in some surprise. The most important things in life are just those elements in it which we do not think of looking for when we are in a mood of cold curiosity, however intense. As a rule, indeed, we realize their existence only when we have been reduced to states of mind which are as remote as could be conceived from that self-possessed condition in which the scientist asks his questions. It is what is bought at the price of humiliation, mental confusion, and inner disturbance that is of importance. All artists know this. And what reveals more than anything the limitations of orthodox psychology is the nature of the questions which it is content to ask.

I am not, of course, suggesting that any sane psychologist would deny that deep knowledge is to be acquired at the price of suffering. I only desire to emphasize, as I have done throughout this book, the limitations of the type of psychological knowledge which is obtained by the issue of questionnaires and by research in laboratories.

4

It is now necessary to consider in more detail the type of mental fixations to which I refer.

The kind of interest in human beings which is exhibited by the intuitive observer is at once passionate and detached; it is only passion which can make us conscious of certain aspects of life, and only detachment which will enable us to envisage those aspects justly. And as this interest grows we become increasingly aware of the intricacy and delicacy of the relations in which people really stand to one another, as opposed to those relations which are fixed by custom and convention. It is our habit to talk of a person's being 'in' or 'out of love,' we make neat little distinctions between 'friends' and 'acquaintances,' and of these acquaintances we are capable of distinguishing business acquaintances from others. But to watch people with a certain kind of passion and concern is to be made to realize that they are continually touching one another in a myriad different and ever-changing ways; that they are to one another in turn positive-negative, fecundating-impregnated, maternal-filial, protective-succouring, dominating-magnetized, and this in ways which may bear any sort of relation to those in which they are grouped by class, sex, or age. Their mutual debts and obligations appear, too, in a new and different light; one sees how they are free to make demands upon one another, receive and bestow gifts, look for help or inspiration, in virtue of laws which are unstudied and unrecognized by ordinary thought.

This rigidity of conception is seen again to come in part from an insensitiveness on the part of most people to the dimension of Time in human affairs. The judgments which we make regarding the people we meet, our evaluation of the situations with which we are presented in

life, are inevitably to a greater or lesser degree out of date. It is in the deepest nature of the mind to be consistent. It spends its time for ever in organizing its material, establishing relationships of different types, dissecting, collating. And the majority of the ideas which it evolves in this way can only be formulated at the expense of leaving the time element out of account. To reduce to order is to immobilize, to strike the movement of life with paralysis, to reduce biology to the level of physics. The intellectual in us lingers with affection over these groups of living statuary, relieved for a moment from the strain of constant adaptation; the artist in us is for ever uttering the word which breaks the spell and allows life to continue its impetuous course onwards. And if he refuses to let sleeping lions lie, it is he also who awakens the princess from her trance with his kiss.

When the mind breaks free from its servitude to its own past there develops in the man a consciousness which is expressed with some completeness by the remark of Dostoevsky that a man may be a wise man on Tuesday, but a fool on Wednesday. And it is only when the individual is thus free to see what is actually taking place in front of his eyes instead of what was there some time before that anything like a real understanding of people's psychology becomes possible for him. He sees life as living and moving, and gains a progressively fuller vision of the nature of those relationships between human beings which I have referred to above.

But this understanding calls for still further disassociations of existing ideas. Take, for example, the way in which people react to one another's individualities. They tend to respond to them as wholes. What I mean is that they find it curiously difficult to envisage the co-existence in person of elements which they like and elements which they dislike. They say of him things like 'I approve of him,' or 'I have no use for her,' or, most naïvely of all,

'I won't hear a word said against him.' The fact that the person is at once—to take a very simple example—a generous friend and, say, a deplorable coward, seems to be of an order which few people can keep their hold on easily. Their feelings about one quality are always flowing over into the other. They are continually threatening to coalesce; they drag one another into their respective orbits. To the spiritual scientist, however, people's idiosyncrasies are seen for what they are—literally 'private mixtures.' He orientates himself not only to individuals as units, but to the principles operating through them. We are moved, and rightly so, by the effect upon us of a personality at the moment when its divergent aspects have been synthesized by passion or will; something new and unique has been achieved. This is the juncture at which art seizes upon the situation. But the intuitionist has an eye as well for the separate ingredients of such a combination and their place in the extra-individual scheme. It is only such an atomizing of the personality which renders possible a vision of the less obvious mechanism of life—a vision which is arrived at by first isolating forces, tendencies, and powers, and then contemplating their function in the world. It is not personalities which clash, but the forces which they have polarized. We are not influenced by individuals, but through them.

But I cannot develop this theme further here. Let me only say in conclusion that to look at life in the way which I am trying to describe is to regard each situation with which one is presented as being unique, to banish from the mind all conceptions of what it ought to be like, of what it has been anticipated as being, of the form it will probably be seen in retrospect to have assumed. The people whose eyes are open in this way are aware that nothing can be said twice, that no conjunction of events ever repeats itself exactly, that, in fine, 'it never can happen again.' The result is a really living form of con-

tact with others and—what is most important—the emergence of people's true relationships to one another. The difference between watching what is in front of one in this manner and adaptation to it in the light of preconceived ideas or principles is almost exactly that between absolutely free self-expression in writing and expression which is conditioned by outside 'considerations.' The moment the author allows the faintest thought of the policy of the paper, the opinion of his critics, consistency with his former utterances, the effect of what he is doing on his sales, to influence his mind, something is killed; he is failing to face the demands of truth. And realistic living implies the same type of sincerity.

5

But what is even more important than a vision of the complexity of people's actual relationships is an understanding of the way in which the creations of the rationalizing mind act as obstacles to prevent them from seeing that these complexities exist. We approach here an intricate question and must tread warily in considering it.

What happens when the mind is attempting to deal with its experience in terms of a system of classification which is too coarse for the purpose in hand is that hosts of important differences become obliterated, and obliterated for the simple reason—to describe the position in the most homely possible terms—that there are not enough symbols to go round. One term, that is to say, may stand in the resulting scheme for any one of half a dozen different objects. We have already noticed a similar situation on an earlier page in considering a quotation from Prof. Otto, illustrative of the fact that such different varieties of the emotion of love as love for woman and love for God are covered by the same overworked word. Nor, of course, is this by any means the end of the complica-

tions which are rendered possible through this insensitive use of language. It is apparent, for instance, that if you break up experience into finer divisions than those established by ordinary thought, you are almost certain to discover, not merely new subdivisions of objects, but new classes of them as well. What I mean is that you will find that what first appear as newly discovered varieties of different objects are seen later to constitute objects in themselves—*i.e.*, a subdivision of A unites with a subdivision of B to form a new object, C. What results is thus not so much a refinement of the existing classification as the emergence of another. It is as if for a political map of Europe you substituted another based on ethnographical divisions.

All this would not be so very bewildering if the process of transition were accomplished in the clear light of consciousness. But, of course, the way in which it actually occurs is markedly different. What takes place in practice is really something like this: We live in the midst of a network of personal relationships of the most complicated order. We are connected with all those with whom we are associated by that web of affinities, repulsions, and attractions to which I am constantly referring throughout this book. This is the level of life. On the level of mind, however, we conceive these intricate facts in terms of an inadequate set of standardized symbols. The consequence is confusion.

Of so much we are already aware. But it is important to see exactly how this confusion comes about. To analyse the situation is to discover that the trouble originates in the obligation which thought imposes upon us to express ourselves in general terms. Thus, we refer to a certain situation by its generic name—speak, for instance, of the ‘unselfishness’ of some individual or other. But we do this having in mind the peculiar nature, direction, and conditioning circumstances of this unselfishness of

his, and the person whom we are addressing is more or less aware that we are using the term with these unspoken, but essential, qualifications. We mean really that the man of whom we are speaking exhibits a particular variety of unselfishness. Then, on another occasion, we assign the same general term of 'unselfishness' to the behaviour of another person, meaning again by implication a certain variety of the quality. Thereupon the mind, seizing the situation on the abstract level, proceeds to consider these two manifestations as identical, simply because they have been given the same label. The results can be terribly misleading, and for this reason: from the psychological point of view it may happen that the difference between these two varieties of 'unselfishness,' both of which are loosely given the same name, is of much greater importance than that between 'unselfishness' and some other concept of a general nature (the reader may recall at this point the difference between St Theresa's and Prof. Graham Wallas' conceptions of 'honour,' referred to in an earlier chapter). What ordinary insensitive psychology is continually doing is to establish distinctions like that, for instance, between snakes and other reptiles, but to neglect those between different kinds of snakes—as, shall we say, between poisonous and non-poisonous varieties.

And in this, I think, lies the real explanation of the fact that people who have any deep or vivid realization of life are always turning away chilled and disappointed from academic works on psychology and sociology. What such mechanized thinking has to offer is a treatment of experience at two or three removes from immediacy. In practice this means that we are repeatedly being invited by it to consider objects which can be resolved by finer perception into several others. We find that we are all the time discussing one object while apparently considering another; all sorts of significant changes are taking place

behind the uniformity of the outer symbols. Of course, this principle remains true however fine the divisions which we establish; we can go on subdividing *ad infinitum*. But my point here is simply that we are confronted with a definite lagging of the mind behind the perceptions; it is being called upon to work with distinctions which are too coarse for the soul to endure. Yet it is the apparent completeness of the organization that has been thus achieved which exercises a sort of hypnotic effect on the mind by deterring it from evolving something more relevant to the realities of life. That is to say, we are for ever in our daily lives coming across experiences which are, in a manner, dealt with for us in anticipation through their having been given *names*. The education of the intuition lies precisely in a cultivation of the habit of considering each of such experiences in themselves, in ignoring the fact that they have already been labelled. What this process leads to is an extensive re-ordering of experience.

This abuse of general terms is responsible, of course, for all manner of confusions. It provides, for example, the mechanism of the ordinary domestic quarrel: the two parties, in turn, seek to avoid facing the truth by falling back upon ambiguous conceptions, denying that the contents of two vessels are different by pointing to the fact that they are similarly labelled. For instance: 'I lent you a hundred pounds when you needed it.'—'Well, I lent you a hundred pounds, too, on one occasion.' But this second statement is an evasion. For while it is true that a financial equilibrium has been established, the fact remains that the first hundred pounds was given at the cost of pain and sacrifice, and the second lightly, with a stroke of the pen. And this is what the first speaker really meant. Or, again, when you say, 'I have to get up still earlier,' you leave out of account all the things which make it easier for you to get up at six than for me to get

up at seven; you've taken cover behind the fact that to say what you said only takes a second, whereas for me to explain what you've done and to defend myself would take me more time than I'm prepared to spend, besides putting me in a position of apparent inferiority.

More important, however, is the way in which such terms—the very stones out of which the structure of rationalization is built—are used in the service of custom and convention. Society has agreed that the distance at which individuals are separated from one another shall be defined by principles which are embodied in phrases like 'remember she's your hostess,' 'in view of such a short acquaintance,' 'respect due to one's employer,' and the rest. In the same way there are all sorts of fixed rules in people's minds which lay down that one should never look at another person's correspondence, that it is a good rule never to borrow and never to lend, that certain questions should not be discussed with servants, that one should never look a gift horse in the mouth.

All this is to say that convention, like the Law, plays for safety; it is prepared to rule out certain fruitful possibilities for the sake of being guaranteed immunity from various others of an unpleasant nature. It stifles all those spontaneous movements in people which, if expressed, would make for disturbance, embarrassment, and confusion, and it does this in the interest of establishing a synthesis on a superficial level of association. That is why artists are such dangerous factors socially. They are always prepared to break up a surface harmony for the sake of liberating reality, for the sake of a deeper fusion of life.

But to live by rules—even if they are rules which are of such a subtle order that only the élite are capable of conforming to them—is to deny the creative possibilities of human association. The only true basis of social existence is not that conformation with a code which is based on common fear and dislike of unpleasantness, but associa-

tion which is maintained in its integrity through the power of the individual to orientate himself rightly in relation to his fellows, and this through his ability to estimate the niceties of each situation as it comes along. True freedom comes only from within. It is only when you can trust me to respect your private affairs with delicacy, and not through mechanical compulsion, that the relation between us becomes really creative. It is true that if I am left free to follow my intuitions regarding each problem that arises I shall perhaps do nothing which I should not have done anyway had I been bound by a rigid convention between us. But there is all the difference in the world between this free and creative dealing with one another and that mechanical solution of each problem which comes from adherence to fixed rules.

ORDER, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL

I

WE have now considered some of the main difficulties which attend the transition from a more naturalistic to a more spiritual level of consciousness, difficulties which have to do more than anything with the habits which the mind has acquired as the result of a certain type of suggestion. We must now turn to certain other difficulties of a rather different type, connected chiefly with the application to life of those intuitive principles which we have been discussing. This is, of course, the important point. For in practice having new 'values' means *acting* differently, and this even in the most localized and domestic of situations.

Perhaps the most important of the obstacles which lie for most of us in the way of creative living consists in what I would describe as Fear of Flux. As we have already seen, the soul experiences an enormous relief in allowing its life to run itself off, as it were, by conformity to ready-made rules, for it shrinks instinctively from the suffering and exhaustion which is involved in individualizing each particular situation as it comes along. In life, no less than in music or painting, art demands a terrible amount of sheer *consciousness*. The complement of this adherence to codes and systems takes the form of entertaining more or less consciously the theory that the alternative to such mechanized living is nothing less than pure chaos. Once you abandon those principles which the mind has so painfully distilled from the undifferentiated mass of raw experience, are you not destined, contends the orderly minded thinker, to relapse into confusion, to be submerged again in those primal waters out of which all things have been shaped?

The answer would seem to be this. There are two levels of consciousness which distinguish themselves sharply from that of the conventional thinker: that chaotic level referred to above on which existence is a mere succession of sensations, and that other level on which objects are seen to be related in terms of a deeper order than any which is apparent to the less illuminated mind. It is as if in the second case we were concerned with an apparently arbitrary distribution of points. From the standpoint of Euclidean geometry their disposition is altogether without significance. Viewed, however, from that of some non-Euclidean system, they are seen to be arranged in a perfectly orderly manner. Now, it is a situation of this type which arises when an individual begins to shift the focal point of his consciousness from the normal to the more intuitive level. He threads the beads of his experience along a series of strings which run in very different directions from those with which the ordinary consciousness is familiar. At an early stage in this proceeding especially so few beads have been re-threaded that they are not sufficient in number to enable an outside observer to deduce from their order the disposition of the new strings. Nor, for that matter, can the individual do very much in that direction himself; he is conscious more than anything of each bead as it comes along. It is only in course of time that he comes to realize the pattern to which he has unwittingly conformed.

What is the most effective way by which we can distinguish between spilling the beads all over the floor—relapsing into chaos—and their significant redistribution? The question is by no means easy to answer, but this much, I think, can usefully be said. Intuitive living, however much it may appear from the outside as a descent to the level of pure emotionalism, of unco-ordinated impulse and caprice, is indisputably something of a widely different order. The attitude of the sensationalist is largely

passive. He savours the quality of each situation as it comes along; there is no principle underlying his behaviour. No one of the lines by which his experiences are seen in retrospect to have been united is felt to be of more importance than any other. To the lotus-eater all roads lead in equally important directions; it is only their convolutions which interest him.

The genuine intuitionist, however, broods over his experience primarily with the object of discovering those directions in which objects are connected together by more vital and creative links. Having thus withdrawn himself and gained some vision of the nature of these relationships, he is next impelled, by the same impulse which drives the genuine artist to create a style, to orientate his personal life in accordance with them; his compass now points nearer the true than the magnetic north, and all the bearings which he has taken are accordingly thrown out. Acting at first almost in blind faith, he is able gradually to do so with fuller and fuller assurance. To revert to our old image, the beads have grown sufficiently numerous to reveal the arrangement of the strings. As he progresses in this manner his past experience appears to him in a continually changing light; he views it successively on more and more profound levels of co-ordination. The reminiscent sensationist, on the contrary, is doomed by the nature of his interest to progress for ever on the same plane—an ant for ever crawling laboriously over its own past.

In spite of the prevalence of sensationalism, however, the predominating impression which one receives in surveying the world to-day is that of the servitude of men's minds to fixed ideas and conceptions. And, as I have already remarked, people imagine that any relaxation of their grip on these standards will result in a descent into confusion and disorder. In part, this feeling would seem to come from a failure to realize the fact that the passage

from one level of consciousness to another is invariably through a period of obscurity. The transition from a series of differences in degree to a difference in kind is always bound to be confusing; there is by definition no conceptual bridge between them. There is no *Zusammenhang* between two different levels of *Zusammenhang*. To transfer the consciousness from one plane to another one must be prepared to negotiate discontinuities—which is much the same as being born again.

2

We must now consider the expression of intuitive living in terms of the social order. The important question here is that of personal responsibility. We are concerned with a question towards which the intuitive thinker will take up a very different attitude from that adopted by the rationalist. For, as we have seen, the typical sociologist inclines strongly to identify 'social work' with participation in some obvious, external activity; the man who is labouring for the world is conceived of as doing certain definite things at definite times—indulging in research, attending the meetings of committees, assisting in the work of some league, association, or group. The tendency of the intuitionist, on the contrary, is always towards emphasizing the potency of hidden forces, of minor adjustments between individuals which, although in the end they count for everything, produce no immediate results of a palpable and concrete order. He lays the heaviest stress of all on the adaptation of the person to his immediate environment, on his seeking out at the cost of pain and confusion that to which he really belongs.

There are very few people who are willing to undertake this formidable task. If we examine the ideals to which people respond most readily to-day, the causes to which they devote themselves with the greatest en-

thusiasm, we cannot help observing that they usually have this character: they exercise a stimulating influence upon the minds of their adherents while at the same time they make a minimum demand upon their self-sacrifice. This may sound a hard saying, but I believe it to be true. Look round the world to-day and you will discover that the great majority of altruistically minded people are giving themselves up to one or other of the myriad 'movements' which are so typical of our modern civilization. They are 'in' the Labour Movement, working for international solidarity, engaged in some type of social research, supporting or sympathizing with this, that, and the other.

Such work is often of great value. Yet its immediate and practical character serves at the same time to obscure the fact that other work of even greater importance is persistently being left undone. These people, selfless as they may appear to be, are really taking the easy path. Easy, at least, relative to that mastering of the lower nature, that purifying of the passions and the will which Religion from the beginning of the world has insisted upon as being the only true basis for the creation of a harmonious order of society. Their work for the world is strictly localized; its very nature is such that it comes to an end with the rising of a committee, the closing of an office door, the putting aside of a pile of books. It demands of the individual little more than an initial act of choice. Once that choice is made the rest is almost mechanical; it consists in executing a succession of straightforward tasks. Moreover, in accomplishing them the individual is sustained by a keen realization of the fact that he is working for a 'cause,' labouring for a clearly defined end. He knows exactly what he is doing and why he is doing it. But the fact remains that he is taking the easy, and the less productive, path.

The situation is much the same with that other form of pseudo-constructiveness which consists in writing and

reading second-rate literature. The orgy of production and consumption which is taking place in this field is one of the distinguishing marks of our time. It resolves itself for the most part—if I may again be forgiven for appearing unsympathetic—into the creation in imagination of what should be accomplished in life. More and more people to-day are being seized with a passion to ‘express themselves’ in print. They are usually doing the exact opposite. What results in most cases is comparable more than anything to the play in a fountain of water which should in reality be doing its unobtrusive, but very much more constructive, work in flowing along the mains underground and out of sight. It is the fruit of failure in performance. More exactly, it is the indirect result of not having chosen, as the consequence of self-discipline, to do something else less pretentious but more vital. We may safely say of the majority of people who are indulging this exuberant mental gambolling what Keats said about Wordsworth on a certain occasion: ‘If he had thought a little deeper at that moment, he would not have written the poem at all.’ And perhaps it was just this *silencing* effect of more profound experience that inspired Dostoevsky to say to a young man who professed a desire to become a poet: ‘Go away and suffer.’

‘The name which can be uttered,’ says Lao-tzu, ‘is not the Eternal Name.’ Unless a person is a great and genuine artist his desire to set down the results of his personal vision should decrease with the degree to which that vision unfolds. The more most of us penetrate to the significance of life the less eager do we become to record our personal relation to it. We discover that there is something impure in our desire to adopt the art form; it represents a choosing of the line of least resistance, an attempt to obtain at least a partial release from the discomfort and responsibility of living rightly in a more vividly apprehended world. What people deny is that life and not

letters can give most of us that richness of experience which we so urgently need; that the sweep, breadth, and charm for which we are always seeking in the rank growth of modern literature could be realized far more completely in our transformed personal lives. Could we but contrive to deepen them, we should decline to write, read, or (what is more important) buy any work which we did not feel to proceed from at least as profound a consciousness of life as that which a more integrated personal existence was leading us to discover in ourselves. That gassy effervescence which we describe as modern letters would gradually subside and our creative forces would run, as indeed they were intended to, through our own veins. The sort of books which we need to-day are those which will inspire people both to write and to read less, books of whose message it could be said in the words of George Fox: 'It is not as a customary preaching, but it is to bring people to the end of all outward preaching.'

What self-discipline and purification demand, on the contrary, is a retreat from the wide and stimulating arena of social work to a circumscribed, and by contrast oppressive, domestic region. For research into emigration problems or variations in the wages of railwaymen (which must, of course, still be undertaken by those persons for whom it is *their work*) there is substituted research into the workings of our own souls. Work for Humanity—that most dangerous of abstractions—now resolves itself into an attempt to perform, perhaps, the most difficult task in the world: that of going through a complete day with serenity. 'Psychology' consists in the novel task of attempting to understand the hearts of the men and women whom we meet in daily life. Instead of the reconstruction of the world we turn to the far less exciting and much more exacting labour of reconstructing ourselves. All of which results in a strain on the organism which a very small proportion of the people who have

'thrown themselves' into this movement or the other would find themselves able to endure.

I am not, of course, attempting to minimize the significance of the vast amount of social work which is to-day being carried on in the world. I am only anxious to emphasize the fact that until such mechanical activity is balanced by an equally intensive concentration on the reform of the individual by the individual for the individual it can never lead to anything fundamental in the way of reforming the world.

3

When, however, the individual does take the step of looking inside himself with the same earnestness with which he has previously considered the world-distribution of malaria, or the conditions of native labour in Uganda, what he discovers—besides a number of disconcerting facts which need not be discussed at this point—is the true nature of the deeper yearnings and repulsions of his psyche. He begins to see for the first time what it is that he is really called upon to do, where his true responsibilities lie, what growth in his soul needs to be fostered, what must be extirpated from his consciousness before any really creative work is possible. Should he go further and attempt to act in the light of such realizations, he finds that he is called upon to withhold all sorts of familiar allegiances, to take unsuspected kinds of risks, relapse, perhaps, for a period into impotence and silence. Further, he will begin to view the 'social activity' of the great mass of people in the world from an unaccustomed angle.

What will disclose itself to his eyes will be the painful spectacle of thousands and thousands of people who are engaged in pursuing the most delusive of aims. Why is it that there is about all these volumes on sociological

questions, about all these people who devote themselves to investigating them, about all these conferences, meetings, and conscientious study groups, an atmosphere which somehow chills the heart? The essential answer to this question is, I think, that one feels that all this activity, for all its air of bustling efficiency, is the expression of a deep confusion inside the souls of the people who indulge in it. Everything which comes straight out of the heart of a man has about it a certain quality. Even if he is giving way to lust, stealing people's property, committing arson or murder, if he is doing it with directness and immediacy it is somehow redeemed; it is whole, true; it carries with it the possibility of its own rectification. But what produces those depressed and uneasy feelings in the observer who contemplates the labours of the social reformers is a more or less clear consciousness that what is being done by them is not done directly. Between motive and action there lies a whole series of unconscious transpositions, inversions, substitutions, and evasions.

The complications possible are almost infinite, and not anyway such that they can be analysed here. But I would at least observe that the activity of almost all these people is rooted, not in a deep desire to do what they are actually doing, but in something else—disappointment, distress at the effect of inaction upon their souls (often sheer fear of stopping, in fact), the wrong identification of the thing that they are working at with labour for some lofty ideal, mental confusion due to their minds having been puzzled and bewildered by theories about life and society which have been spun by clever men who are able to disguise their own fears and repressions in this form. And this is why what comes out of them is usually so dreary, hopeless, and dead. And this, also, is why they affect one with this feeling of unassignable depression. They have begun by denying in some way or other the power of personal love to recreate the world, and they end by working

patiently, tenaciously, fiercely, hopelessly, according to their natures, at tasks which bring them no immediate joy or feelings of release, which are not done because they have a direct impulse to do that thing and no other, but out of a habit, an adopted conviction, a sense of duty, or—worst of all—a theory. And this, of course, leads them to picture the reforming of the world not as a work each step of which, even if arduous, is promotive of a deep joy in the heart, because it is directly related to something that is responded to immediately, but as a laborious mechanical business which must be accomplished with long-suffering, patience, and uninspired persistence.

The trouble lies in the fact that there is no principle entailed in their activity which enables them to bring more than a very limited number of their actions into relation with their central interest in life. They have no philosophy which gives them a basis for life as a whole. The more they concentrate upon their specialized objects, the more does the remainder of their existence become for them dreary, oppressive, and meaningless. They come very easily to regard themselves as lonely pioneers, fighting a losing fight against the darkness and disorder in which the world is plunged. And this comes about comprehensibly enough. For if you begin by losing sight of that subtle spiritualizing process in life which is being accomplished all the time in an infinity of minor situations, you come naturally enough to dismiss the episodes of the purely personal life as unimportant. You find it more and more difficult to see in what sense people, by simply working a little every day at the task of purifying their emotions and desires, can be said to be doing anything very positive for the great cause of Humanity. You fail to understand how a man, by behaving properly when he is in a room alone, can be doing as much for the world as another who is engaged in distributing pamphlets or collecting funds for some movement. As a result, all

those myriads of personal contacts, little reverses, educative episodes, fertilizing occasions, sudden *aperçus*, of which the texture of life is woven, lose their whole significance. They are not seen to be just as much part of the regenerative process as events which relate more obviously to progress or emancipation. Existence, so far from being, as it is for the religious type, a continuous work of spiritualization, becomes a waste of disconnected happenings, relieved only by those periodical and highly localized moments at which the man can convince himself that he is doing something for a definite cause.

What such people are doing is to handle the *results* of that absence of personal love which has produced the terrible features of our present civilization. This is a task for a certain type of individual, but for the great majority of those who are engaged in it it is nothing else than a curtain between them and a vision of their true creative possibilities. Only when they are prepared to face the more searching ordeal of looking at their own hidden and struggling impulses will they realize what it is that they are doing to themselves. They are among the most unhappy, deluded, and confused creatures which our present type of culture has produced.

4

But the sociologically minded are, of course, only one of a number of types which exhibit this condition of external order at the price of internal confusion. Everywhere one finds people whose apparently 'constructive' activities reveal themselves on analysis as the form assumed by their repudiation of deeper responsibilities which they are unwilling to face. There is no more characteristic expression of a disinclination to deal with the problems of one's own life than preoccupation with those of other people's. It is hardly going too far to say that the altruistic

labours of the great majority of people to-day represent nothing else than a subtle type of interference with the operation of deeper principles in life. That is to say, if they would only stop reforming the world, and wait for a spell in silence and inactivity, they would, perhaps for the first time, catch a glimpse of the direction in which their real creative possibilities lie. A whole volume could be written on the function of quietism in revealing to the soul its true potentialities and obligations. But the subject is too large to be considered here. It is enough to say that we come back to the venerable injunction: Know Thyself. The process of this discovery is painful; it involves facing a period of confusion and inaction; the paths which open to a man as the result of such a period of introversion are such that they will be both unfamiliar and difficult to follow. But the consequence of it all is the beginning for the individual of his truly creative activity as well as—most important of all—the laying of the foundations of an organic type of society, a society in which each individual is linked to his fellows in accordance with his deeper affinities, powers, and sympathies. We have been engaged too long in attempting to build up society by the method of filling the mind of the individual with a collection of stimulating general ideas and leaving his soul an unexplored region of repressions, fears, and unsatisfied yearnings. It is time that we went back again to the beginning, to that centre in which all our acting, thinking, and dreaming originates. Social reform, like charity, begins at home.

MECHANISM VERSUS SPONTANEITY

I

BEFORE considering how a new social order may be created on the basis of the mind working on the data of refined perception (and the argument of this book is designed to lead up to this problem), we must pause for a while to examine the fashion in which the orthodox social reformer attempts to build up a new world without taking the findings of intuition into account.

The object which he sets himself is that of laying down the foundations of a new order of society, a society in which each person is allotted his appointed place in accordance with the most reasonable and clear-headed principles. The artist and the religious person are not, of course, forgotten. The job of the first is that of beautifying the New State; that of the second, the providing of its inhabitants with ideals. All this is very satisfying to one's sense of fitness until one looks into the matter a little closer. It then appears that the sociologists entertain a conception of art and religion which is of a painfully elementary order, naturalistic to a degree. That is to say, instead of making the inner life the basis of all creative activity, they regard it as something which is somehow added on to the rest of existence. They assume that the foundations of society can be laid while leaving a certain type of experience out of account, and that this experience can be taken into consideration afterwards, when the material aspects of the problem have been safely dealt with. They treat art, in fact, like an 'extra' which is introduced into the curriculum of a private boarding establishment to add a touch of real refinement to the education. It is conceived by them as a sort of embellishment to life, something which converts it from penny

plain into twopence coloured. Read the writings of these people carefully, and you will discover that however rhetorical they may become on the subject of the culture which is to be developed by the masses when once the irritating material difficulties have been got out of the way, they never for one instant depart from the principle that the form of society is to be determined by impersonal scientific investigation, while such pursuits as art and religion remain simply 'activities' which are allowed for within the scheme which has been evolved by the detached mind working alone. However expansive they become on the subject of the New State, they invariably take it for granted that the pictures with which the place will be decorated will serve to cover a system of steel girders which have been designed and assembled on the most scientific principles. In other words, the function of art and religion is, considered at the best, to be that of filling in the blank spaces which have been left in the pattern that reason has designed. A division of labour has been arranged. Superior perception, insight and intuition are to be utilized in the service of culture; the arrangements regarding social organization, administration, and legislation are to be based on science. Once again, naturalism has attempted to localize the spiritual and refused to let it play anything more than an accessory part in solving the problems of life.

I do not suggest, of course, that the sociologists hold this idea consciously. But it is implied inescapably by the principles on which they are working. Science means detachment. As applied to human beings it means leaving 'subjective impressions' out of account, proceeding with order, method, circumspection. Art and religion on the other hand imply faith in things not seen, passionate individualism, a recurrence of those periods of disorder which always accompany the creating of a deeper synthesis. But more than anything they imply love, not as a force which

impels men to act in accordance with the principles which reason has elaborated, but as the sole means of leading them to discover what their true relations are, and hence what form a regenerated society will assume.

The roots of this crude naturalism are not difficult to trace. We have to do with a group of people whose ideas regarding such subjects as art and religion are of a painfully elementary order. They entertain, for instance, the notion to which I have already referred that art is something which can be introduced into life or abstracted from it at will. It is a specialized pursuit, like engineering or forestry, with the difference that it is regarded as being something of a luxury, while these others are necessities contrasted with which art and religion appear as something rather remote. These people think of the artist, for instance, as an 'unworldly' type who carries in his head a vision of the fair cities in which men will one day dwell, and all the rest of it. As for mysticism, it is conceived of as being even more removed from actualities. In other words, the sociologists hold that whatever vision the artist and the mystic may enjoy of ultimate purposes and ideals, their intuitions must on no account be taken into consideration in building the road that leads towards achieving them. We are faced with the ruthless dichotomy of which Dostoevsky speaks: the material and the spiritual have been violently dissociated, cut apart with a 'learned knife.'

I repeat, the great assumption at the basis of all sociological research is that you can create the form of a new society simply by clear-headedness and patience alone, that you are engaged in an enterprise which you can carry through without the need of God, faith, spiritual values, and love. All that you need for success is a sense of altruism in the individual sufficiently powerful to ensure his ordering his behaviour in accordance with the principles which you have elaborated. And since there is

no evidence whatever in favour of the view that men are altruistic by nature, you abruptly leave the plane of Science and make the enormous assumption—enormous, but absolutely necessary if your system is to work at all—that freedom will automatically engender virtue.

Here we encounter again the old shoddy Rousseauistic conception of 'the natural goodness of man' which would emerge if only the poor fellow were not everywhere in chains, a conception put forward this time in the face of the terrible teaching of the French and Russian Revolutions, and put forward, not by revolutionary fanatics, but by those whose business it is to give us our standards of thought. Take, for example, these passages from Mr Sidney Webb and Mr G. D. H. Cole respectively :

Men are, in their manners and morals, to a far larger extent than is yet realized, what their fellows expect them to be. It is in this sense that Socialist institutions within a community, exacting from the average man a higher level of morality than that of a Capitalist System—like a young League of Nations among communities themselves—bring about an actual change of heart, and are thus the effective instruments of religion. (*Socialist Commonwealth.*)

For democracy in industry and in every sphere of social life has for its supreme justification its power to call out in the mass of men the creative, scientific, and artistic impulses which capitalism suppresses, or perverts, and to enable the now stifled civic spirit to work wonders in the regeneration of human taste and appreciation of the good things of life. (*Guild Socialism Re-stated.*)

Such ideas are not merely the property of these two particular thinkers; they lie at the basis of the thinking of practically every social theorist of any importance to-day. In fact, such people are driven to entertain them. For if you leave God out there is nothing left to put your trust in except the hope that the ordinary process by which

circumstances are created by the human will can be reversed and that institutions can 'bring about an actual change of heart.' Once more, you deny Original Sin, and do so at your peril. What we are presented with is a social system which has been evolved by the scientific mind working alone and which yet depends for its maintenance on the validity of a notion which has been rejected as wildly romantic by all the best minds in the world since the days of Ancient Greece. It has been rejected for the plain reason that it is contrary to experience, that it conflicts flagrantly with the fact that there is evil in men's hearts.

The question of environment and of its power to promote desirable and undesirable conduct is, of course, extremely complicated. But I think that one may venture to point out certain issues that it raises.

Conscious of the undeniable fact that most people reflect to an extreme degree the influence exercised by their surroundings, the naturalistic thinker proceeds confidently to the conclusion that if only what is outside be altered, what is inside will be correspondingly changed. The notion is as attractive as it is simple. But apart from the fact that it implies a conception of the passivity of the organism which is absolutely without biological foundation, it leaves out of account the circumstance that the environment is itself ultimately the product of human passions and desires. But, expostulates the sociologist, that is exactly my point! What are the new conditions which we students of social phenomena, equipped with clear and progressive ideas, propose to create, but 'the product of human passions and desires'? The reply is that this proposal overlooks the fact that no order, however enlightened, will prevent the ultimate development of conditions, the sources of which the new environment is powerless to affect. In other words, across the countryside of the New State there lies always the shadow cast

by the potentialities of the men and women who inhabit it. Socialistic theory would have it that these seeds are affected favourably by improved conditions, in much the same way as the ovaries of some aquatic creatures might be modified by putting some chemical into the tank in which they live. But this is a matter of opinion. Nobody in his senses, of course, would deny that vice finds it more difficult to propagate itself in the light, or that talent thrives on opportunity. Naturalism assumes that this is a sufficient basis for optimism. Religion, on the contrary, has always maintained that it is not; that, whatever the outside changes, that which in the soul of man corresponds to the ovaries in the above image remains substantially unaffected; that good comes ultimately from within. And here lies the issue.

I would submit that it should surely be obvious to us after a century or so of socialistic thought that liberty is a double-edged privilege. What it does is to release that which is lying dormant in the soul. It produces the brilliant surgeon who is saved from the stifling influence of poverty by a system of open scholarships. It produces, also, the plutocrats who are at present busily engaged in vulgarizing life all over the world. In fact, three-quarters of the ugliness and cruelty of modern life is due to nothing less than the acquisition of freedom by people who were once cooped up in factories, workshops, and offices. But socialist theory obstinately continues to have it that the Poor are potentially Good, given the chance, while the Rich, who, it is forgotten, are the ex-poor, are actively Bad. It is customary to refer to pre-Marxian socialism as 'utopian.' Nothing could be much more utopian than this idea that the workers are passive instruments only needing good 'influences' to be turned into model citizens of the New State. It is true that masses and masses of them are good, honest men. So, to perhaps a greater degree still, are that remnant of the once un-

spoiled peasantry of Central Europe who still sing their national songs, wear their picturesque costumes and the like. But this is because their imaginations are still unawakened.

What are the results of education? Nothing less than the bringing home to the individual of his relation to the infinite. The unsophisticated soul passes his time in a sort of charmed sleep. The mind may be active, but its subject-matter is simple and familiar. The passions may be violent, but they are directed to concrete and commonplace objects. Most problems are provided with a traditional solution. The notion of extending the scope of his activities still lies latent in his unreflective mind. He lives like a dog which roams freely about within the confines of his master's estate. But the frontiers of his little world are purely psychological. It is true that they are difficult to pass; a man may live within them for a lifetime while inhabiting physically the most sophisticated of worlds. In the end, however, a time inevitably comes when he realizes that the doors of all spiritual prisons are locked only on the inside, that he is free to expand. The yeast of infinite desire begins to work in his nature. He sees his little grocery business as the nucleus of a whole system of stores up and down the country. Or he realizes that the world is filled with an endless array of seductive women, each with her unique appeal. Or he imagines his knowledge widening and widening until he becomes the master of a group of abstruse subjects. Or he becomes aware of the fact that he has it in him to sway, not only the village, but masses of men with his compulsive eloquence. The seeds within him begin to sprout.

Now I would submit that education does nothing but present to a man the possibilities which are to be discovered by him in life. In practice this means that it reveals to him the possibilities which are latent in his own psyche. The only difference between the man in his

primitive condition and in the condition in which he finds himself after education is that he is able to express his natural tendencies in far more varied and subtle forms. There is no evidence that a passage through a university can do anything in the way of modifying a man's *nature*. The scholar, previously aware only of simple issues, is now able to handle others of a complicated order. The sensualist learns of novel and refined ways of satisfying a fundamental need. The mystic is provided with a more complicated world to spiritualize. The rationalist becomes expert at expressing a basic scepticism in philosophical terms. That, as I see the matter, is all. Vice is a lapsing from virtue. To learn new ways of gratifying elevated impulses is *ipso facto* to become exposed to the novel temptations by which they are paralleled. Let us not be deceived by the probity of the circumstanced being who is cut off at present not only from the influence of angels of light, but from that of devils as well. To become sufficiently refined to appreciate Beethoven is merely to have transferred oneself to the level on which one can for the first time realize the significance of the Marquis de Sade. The poles of good and evil remain unchanged; only the flow between them is enriched and diversified.

The belief in the natural goodness of man is only possible to the most unsophisticated type of soul. And I think that with the progressive exploration of the Unconscious of man the ideas of socialists and sociologists on this matter will be subjected to increasing criticism. Whatever the limitations of the psycho-analysts, one cannot deny that they have an eye for the unconscious desires and cravings in the human psyche. To read about Communism in their works, for instance, in terms of the Infantile El Dorado Phantasy is to see interesting possibilities ahead. The psychologist will, perhaps, one day make clear to these thinkers what Religion has told them from the beginning: that their ideas on the subject of

human happiness and innate goodness belong to the order of childish, unconscious wish-fantasies and represent not realistic thinking, but a turning away from reality. And perhaps with their naïve respect for the scientist they may listen to him where they turned a deaf ear to the mystics and saints.

2

The attitude of the sociologists to art is only a particular manifestation of a general tendency on their part to ignore spiritual in favour of naturalistic values. This is revealed very clearly by their conception of the part which religion should play in the life of an emancipated society. Just as the artist is for them a person who creates certain beautiful things, utilizing in the process instincts and intuitions for which the social theorist has no other particular use, so is the religious individual a person who specializes in a peculiar kind of traffic with the Unseen. Take these further remarks by Mr Cole :

The essence, however, of the spiritual freedom of Churches, and, indeed, of all associations based on belief or opinion, lies in independence of the material, economic, and even of the civic, structure of Society, and in the working out of their own problems in terms of spiritual and not of economic or civic power, and certainly without invoking the material coercions of Society.*

Now it is perfectly reasonable to distinguish the sphere of the spiritual from that of the temporal. But the significance of such a division, it must be remembered, is exactly proportional to the stage of degeneration which has been reached by the religious life of the community. It is all very well for Mr Cole to talk about the Churches 'working out their own problems in terms of spiritual and not of economic or civil power,' but, as he himself recognizes,†

* *Guild Socialism Re-stated*, p. 117.

† See his *Social Theory*, ch. xi.

such working-out must necessarily lead in the end to nothing less than the reshaping of material life. To be religious in the proper sense of the term is not simply to pursue one's worldly activities in a different spirit; it is to bring into existence, just through the nature of that spirit, a completely new set of circumstances. That regrouping of objects in accordance with a deeper principle which is the first fruit of spiritual vision must result sooner or later, if such vision is genuine, in a new class of things, a new set of obligations, a new order of relationships. A profound reorganization takes place, firstly of the psyche of the individual concerned, and secondly, as an inescapable consequence, of that structure of society within which Mr Cole has so carefully located religion.

Of course, when a religious institution is dead or moribund, as is unfortunately the case with so many of the organized churches to-day, it is possible to treat it in this autocratic fashion. But the moment it becomes alive its influence is revealed by the fact that it transforms the society in the midst of which it is placed. For religion, when genuine, is a force which leads to the complete penetration of every aspect of life with a certain vital, transforming essence. It profoundly modifies all outer forms, and makes not only a new Heaven, but a new Earth. It is true that in these materialistic days we have little experience of the operation of this force, but this does not alter the position. On the other hand, if Religion is a mere dead-letter, it has no business to be tolerated in any society, whether socialistic or not. It is then a lifeless institution without potency or creative power. But in no circumstances can you introduce this terrifyingly destructive agent into your society and expect that the proportions of that society will not be distorted, or even destroyed, to give place to those which are the expression, not of calculated relationships, but of inner spiritual affinities. Mr Cole has rightly appreciated the fact that an

association of believers is different in character from any ordinary social body, but he has failed to realize that the principles on which they take their stand are in the last analysis profoundly antagonistic to those which lie at the foundation of the type of social organization of which their association forms a part. If you like to establish a system of society on the basis of Reason-cum-the-Natural-Goodness-of-Man, well and good. But nothing could be more short-sighted, more indicative of confused thinking, than to include within it an institution which, properly conceived, is seen to exist for the express purpose of negating that system and substituting another for it. I find it difficult to resist the impression that Mr Cole has assigned a place to religion in his Ideal Society very much in the spirit in which a conscientious child leaves a corner for the elephants or the leopards in its Noah's Ark.

In saying all this I am referring, of course, to Religion when it is a really active force in the human soul. In these materialistic days its potencies remain almost completely unrealized, so that this powerful current which, once switched on, breaks up the structure of materialistic society very much in the same way that electricity resolves water into its components in electrolysis, is employed by our modern spiritual reformers only in the most hesitating and ineffectual of ways. We live in a society the condition of which reflects only too eloquently our persistent disregard of spiritual values in the past. Our institutions, laws, and customs are the outward expression, the very crystallization in space and time, of an inner spiritual torpor. When, now, the modern religious type attempts to do something to change the nature of society it makes the mistake of accepting this fossilized structure without question and then proceeding to bring a religious influence to bear upon some single, isolated point. This, it seems to me, is what was done recently by the group

headed by Sir Henry Slesser in the Trade Unions Bill dispute. They appealed to our Christian feelings at a given moment and in a particular emergency. But surely it must be all or nothing! Either Christianity must be lived out, with the effect of regenerating society and sweeping away all the horrors of the capitalist system, or it must be left out of account. If our spiritual beliefs are going to become so real to us that they can induce us to act resolutely at this particular juncture, they are going to induce us also to reshape the whole of life. Such a potent force is not to be localized. The spiritual acts like a yeast which leavens the whole lump, or does not act at all. It is not a hose-pipe which can be directed at will on a given point.

If I am not mistaken, it is a confusion of this type into which many writers on social questions tend to fall. They are inconsistent; not logically, but emotionally. They entertain on the one hand certain ideas about the reform of society, and on the other a more or less vague belief in the power of the spiritual, not apparently realizing that its operation would inevitably involve the annihilation, or at least the extensive modification, of the very institutions and types of social organization for the future of which they are so readily inclined to speculate and make plans. Their idealism and their thought are dissociated at the roots. The fusion of the two would profoundly alter both.

Of course, the sociologists themselves are not altogether free from suspicions that there is something deficient in a mechanically drawn up scheme. Prof. J. A. Hobson writes as follows:

Suppose that the business life can be set upon what appears to be a sound and equitable basis, is human nature capable of responding satisfactorily to such an environment? . . . Supposing that a salary basis of payment, a shortened work-day and security of tenure, with adequate insurance against

economic mishaps, had been obtained in all regular occupations, would the quickened sense of co-operation yield a productive energy adequate to the requirements? To this question it must, I think, be frankly answered, that we cannot tell. We have no sufficient data for a confident reply.

(*Work and Wealth*, p. 284.)

Prof. Hobson, although himself a severe critic of mechanical thinking in the realm of sociology, has here betrayed a curiously naïve attitude towards the social problem. By approaching the question from this particular angle he is simply inverting the natural process of causation. Instead of considering whether theory has adapted itself to life, he wonders whether life will be prepared to accede to the demands of thought!

You find the same thing in the work of Mr Sidney Webb. But he has no misgivings. He has drawn up his scheme for a Social Commonwealth, and its inhabitants have to conform to its principles, whether they like it or not:

It cannot be assumed that any young man or woman has any right to employment in the particular occupation that he or she may prefer; or that those who qualify will be taken on, still less that they will be chosen for the particular posts to which they aspire. It must clearly be the community's needs that will decide.

What Mr Webb has done is to define the nature of what purports to be a common social aim and then demand of the individuals who make up the community that they should conform to it. And in his zeal to bring about this conformity he has gone so far as to deny the only true basis for society—the self-fulfilment of each of the persons who make it up. If the individual is not somehow to be allowed to work through to doing that which he loves, if society is going to be anything less than the organization of these deep creative impulses into a system without any violence being done to a single one of them, then all

that will be produced will be a temporary stability of an external order, artificial and imposed from without. It is the mind which must organize the results produced by the impulses of the heart, not the heart which must conform to the dry enactments of the head.

3

We have now, I hope, gained some idea of the limitations of an unduly abstract approach to the problem of creating a new social order. What we must now consider is the same attitude of mind as it is expressed in the treatment of current problems by economists, eugenists, and statisticians generally. This is a more serious matter, for although the plans for the New State still remain floating in the air (where they properly belong) anything which is written about the existing situation touches us in an immediate sense. What I will now try to make clear is the manner in which abstract thinking in this field invariably misrepresents the actual facts of the case.

The point which I am anxious to establish to begin with is that the problems which occupy the minds of such thinkers are not true problems at all. They are artificial creations, brought into existence by a wilful detachment of outward conditions from their ultimate source in the behaviour of individuals in their private lives. What happens is that by a process of elaborate abstraction, comparable to that by which the physicist strikes an average between the erratic movements of an enormous number of molecules and assigns to them a common impulse as a group, they isolate various general tendencies in economic and social life and then proceed to regard this system of abstractions as having somehow a more real existence than the infinitely complex happenings from which they have been disengaged.

The consequence is that by the time economic facts

come to be considered by students of this type they have become almost completely divorced from their root cause—*i.e.*, the inclination of numbers of separate individuals at different points to adopt one course of action rather than another. The fact that even such phenomena as the fluctuations in the quantity of grain transported across America have, no less than the variations in the number of halfpennies in a child's purse, their ultimate source in human passions and prejudices, thus becomes completely lost sight of. 'Economic Life' becomes something which has a separate existence of its own with its own laws and processes. The next stage is that these materialistic thinkers (for this failure to realize the spiritual origin of material events implies nothing less than a materialistic outlook) begin to imagine that the problem of social life can be solved by a manipulation of these purely derivative elements, as if the selfishness and greed in the heart of men would not in course of time bring into existence, just through that chain of causality which such people ignore, the original state of affairs. Then comes a further development: people are deceived by the spurious air of solidity with which these thinkers contrive to invest the purely abstract objects of their attention and begin to regard concern with such statistical facts as being in some way more realistic than concern with the vital, if invisible, sources of such external conditions in the human soul. Finally, you have people considering those forces which work directly on such invisible centres as being secondary rather than primary in nature and making preposterous attempts to measure them in terms of the remote and relatively unimportant effects which they finally produce. That is to say, you find people accepting the material as the radical and determining element in the situation and revaluing the spiritual by its standards.

Nor is this the only consequence of severing economic life in this way from its roots. There results also a mis-

apprehension of the nature of that social reform which another type of thinker is trying to bring about within the hearts of men. How, enquires the 'realistic' economist, can you possibly deal with the vast problems of industrial life by merely producing 'a change of heart'? What about all the frightfully complicated questions of organization, co-ordination, production, and distribution which are involved in a civilization like our own? The answer is simple: The reformer who concentrates his attention on the psyche does not, nor ever could, profess to deal with such matters directly: his aim is that of bringing about a state of things in which their form will be profoundly modified and simplified. Those 'conditions' which are so dear to the heart of the practical reformer are, as I have already pointed out, nothing but the outward expression of an internal state. As that state changes, so will they also be modified. I have no space to develop the point here, but it will surely be apparent to every reflective person that the economic changes which would result from even a minor change in the emotional disposition of the mass of the population—such as would lead them, for instance, to lose their taste for senseless luxury, alcohol, sensational literature, greyhound racing, and cheap motor-cars—would be enormous. The first consequence of the cultivation of the inner life is a reduction in one's wants.

The position is much the same in the case of eugenics. The eugenist tends to forget that all those conditions which so exercise his mind are traceable in the end to deficiencies in the perception of thousands and thousands of isolated individuals. Dean Inge refers in one of his essays to semi-idiot who have been trained to behave in society as fully responsible beings so that people shall be beguiled into marrying them. Make this a legal offence if you will, but is it not obvious that the most effective protection against such wiles is the possession of decent

instincts? Nobody but an idiot ever wants to marry an idiot, and none but the most insensitive would be deceived for a moment by the bearing of even the most carefully trained mental degenerate. What is important, however, is the wider development of this principle. If we can succeed in inducing people to purify their personal lives we shall be working towards the creation of a race whose members will act rightly, not because they have been carefully instructed in the nature of genetic behaviour, but because they are guided in their daily conduct by superior insight and intuition. Concentrate on the soul of the individual and you deal with all your problems at their source.

There is nothing in the least unrealistic about working from this end of the scale. It signifies, rather, as I have already remarked, dealing with the social problem on the plane of causes rather than on that of effects. And, naturally, no conflict is implied with those people who are engaged in doing their best to produce order in that state of things which is being brought about by the present condition of the collective human soul. The man who is working to create a situation in which there will no longer be present, for instance, certain inner conditions which express themselves ultimately in the social phenomenon of prostitution, recognizes clearly enough the function of the other person who is attempting to deal with the actual position as constructively as he can. Every reasonable vegetarian is in favour of more humane conditions in our slaughter houses, while such places exist. While there are accidents (which there always will be) let us in Heaven's name maintain as efficient an ambulance service as possible. The only thing to which the religious type of reformer objects is the claim which is too often put forward by the sanitary worker that he is offering a more radical solution to the problem.

He is not. He is simply working in one of the two

great arenas in which those who are concerned for the future of the race find themselves called upon to labour. In accordance with our inborn proclivities we may choose either to deal immediately with the thoughts and feelings of men by persuading them to turn from evil—and this is the method of Religion; or we may do our best to maintain as much order as possible in the state of things which has been brought about by that wickedness which the religious man is attempting to expugn—and this is the method of the social reformer *par excellence*. Both types of work are indispensable. But certainly the second is neither more important, nor more ‘realistic,’ than the first. On the contrary, it is not unreasonable to suggest that it is the religious man who is the more ‘realistic’ of the two, since he is dealing with the roots of evil and not with its mechanical results in terms of outer events.*

The important point in all this, however, is not that a man should choose one field of activity rather than another, but that he should realize as clearly as possible when he is dealing with primary and when he is dealing

* Any attempt to represent scientific social reform as a religious activity (as is done by so many writers on the subject to-day), or to make religion a matter of co-operating in secular efforts at social reconstruction (as is done by Mr F. A. M. Spencer in his recently published and, I am afraid, rather muddle-headed *Civilization Re-made by Christ*, 1928) is bound to lead to confusion. The following remarks by the late F. W. Robertson are worth quoting in this connection (*Sermons*, 1859): ‘The Gospel principle begins from within and works outwards. The world’s principle begins with the outward condition, and expects to influence inwardly. To expect that by changing the world without, in order to suit the world within, by taking away all difficulties and removing all temptations, instead of hardening the man within against the forces of outward temptation—to adapt the lot to the man, instead of moulding the spirit to the lot, is to reverse the Gospel order of procedure.’

with secondary causes. The modern tendency is to exhaust the energies on problems which have been brought into existence only as the result of our failure to concentrate on others of a more fundamental nature. And it is the mark of the really discerning person that he knows which problems are which.

This inability to understand the difference between the fundamental and the merely derivative elements in a complex is exhibited by the ordinary social reformer in all manner of ways. And almost always, by his heavy insistence on concrete and definite, but really not very significant, facts, he contrives to bewilder the mind of that intuitive type of thinker for whose enlightenment alone I am writing this book. For, quite unaware of the depths of his own guile, he contrives to present his suggestible victim with a situation which, although it is perfectly real in one sense, is quite fictitious in another. It comes about in this fashion: The conscientious investigator, on turning his attention, say, to eugenics, is brought face to face immediately with the most alarming state of affairs: everybody is marrying, giving in marriage, begetting offspring on the most shockingly unscientific lines. Thereupon, without further reflection, he attempts to remedy matters *on the level on which he finds them*. He hastily concludes that it is *his* facts which will have to be faced if the situation is to be remedied. The next stage is that, in the face of the most profound psychological considerations, he brings into violent and arbitrary juxtaposition the two extremes of a long chain of causes and effects: at one end multitudes of individuals confronted by palpable, concrete actualities in a circumscribed domestic circle; at the other certain abstractions from the ultimate results of their collective behaviour. These abstractions are together presented to the ordinary citizen as 'the facts' about 'the state of the race,' although what they represent is a pure chimera, something which is not anything in particular,

but a series of relations between a series of relations. 'What do you propose to do about *this*?' the citizen is asked; and is confronted at the same time with a pile of alarming statistics. Naturally, he is confused, since he cannot help seeing that the *this* in question is the final outcome of what is being done by him and his kind in millions of bedrooms all over the world. But, at the same time, he knows, by a deep instinct, that he is in the greatest spiritual danger if he does not continue to work on the basis of the data which alone are real and immediate to him. Of course, if he marries the wrong girl he will thereby contribute his quota to the degeneration of the race, just as if he buys a certain type of hoe he will, for all he knows, help to foster some vicious tendency in Australian economics. But his vital choice must always be between alternatives which are presented to him in flesh and blood. He obscurely recognizes the fact that he can only favourably affect the total situation, not by reacting to it directly—for it has, I repeat, no substantial existence—but by solving his personal problems in the light of clarified instincts.

All truly creative work is done by people who have their eyes fixed on the thing before them. The good craftsman contributes ultimately to the wealth of the nation by his delight in doing a job of work well. He will not be inspired to labour any better because he has read in the paper that the standard of national craftsmanship is threatening to decline. At any rate, if he does it will not be for long. Only the immediate has final power over the immediate. I have, of course, put the case in an extreme form. But I am convinced that the characteristically modern habit of attempting to stimulate people to productive activity by dazzling them with all manner of sensational considerations which are really irrelevant to the radical issue is impotent to bring about any true amelioration of social conditions.

4

There are two more features of this practice of abstract thinking which I must touch upon. The first is the significance of the deep instinctive recoil of the man of sentiment from any appeal to statistics. Invariably he regards them with distrust. I suggest that his behaviour should cause the scientific thinker to pause and reflect. Usually, of course, the scientist is content to dismiss such revulsion as an expression of sentimentality, laziness, or a cowardly refusal to look 'facts' in the face. His constant complaint is that people will not take the situation with sufficient seriousness; it is left to *him*, the sociologist, to elucidate the truth by patient research. I submit—although I am well enough aware that the suggestion will be received in some quarters as scandalous—that the truth is that the ordinary person who has still any instincts left is aware deep down in his heart that all this tabulation and analysis of facts is in reality *beside the real point*. The conclusion seems to me inescapable: if all this activity was really related to the roots of life it would affect the minds of an infinitely greater number of people than it in actuality does. It is not that people do not respond to creative thinking, but that the sociologist is not dealing with fundamentals.

Statistics, by their nature, are always bound to leave out of account some of the most important elements in the case. And it is because underneath people are aware of this fact that they treat them with such unaccountable indifference. Let me refer once more to the facts of eugenics. They are, presumably, accurate, having been amassed by careful and reliable persons. They are of great value for a variety of purposes. And yet people remain uneasy with regard to their bearing on their own conduct. Why? Because, I think, they realize that they are not the whole truth. The scientific eugenicist is obliged to treat

human relationships on the purely biological level. We are for his purposes—the circumstance is no reflection upon him—simply a collection of animals who differ from those of a lower order through the fact that we are able to direct our evolution with some degree of consciousness. We pass on our characteristics in accordance with the fixed laws which he makes it his business to elucidate; feeble-mindedness, for example, follows straightforward Mendelian rules.

We are, however, something more than animals as well. And it is just the operation of that ‘something’ which serves in so many cases to stultify the value of the eugenist’s conclusions. For it is precisely in the nature of the spiritual to introduce into the equation from above, as it were, an element which transforms, polarizes, and re-groups those other elements the combination of which is conditioned by the laws of mechanical necessity. To be a saint or a genius is to abrogate biological laws in virtue of some power which is more potent than that of animal life. In so far as the individual is capable of drawing on this power he will rise above the level of the merely biological. If this is true of the individual life (and the fact is testified to by the accomplishment of generations of superior men and women), it is no less true of the process of the dissolution of the individuality in its union with another. We feel obstinately, in the face of all the scientific evidence, that inspired love is *justified*. What springs out of a true union on the plane of the spirit must *in the end* make for order and wholeness on the plane of the material. For eugenics, however, all unions are on the same level, and are measured exclusively in terms of certain results which they produce of a limited type. This is not enough. There is a profound difference between a union which is the product of enlightened love and a union which is the product of mere lust, curiosity, or mercenary calculation, though often irreproachable from

the genetic point of view. The first will contribute to the spiritualizing of the world; the second to its materialization. But—and this once again serves to reveal the barrenness of research on the plane of mere *results*—neither that love which serves to generate spiritual value, nor that value itself is measurable to an appreciable degree by scientific method—although I would suggest that even on the scientific level the eugenists might discover, if they had the wit to undertake such a research, that the offspring of love marriages tended to be of a superior type, even in respect of more obvious qualities. But the issues which are involved are enormous: what, for instance, of the great spiritual principle of redemption, that mysterious law by which the higher is driven to sacrifice its achieved integrity by union with that which it has transcended?

It is the same in all the other fields in which human behaviour is examined in a spirit of scientific detachment: to reduce to intelligible order is to simplify, and to simplify is again to render the problem *unreal*. To take one further instance, the principles of economics are valuable enough as far as they go. But they are arrived at by leaving out of account just those complications which really tell from the human point of view. Most sensitive people feel, for instance, that it is in some way more *complete* to buy things from people with whom we are in sympathy, that our actions should be organic one with another, that to make the business of buying and selling exist in a closed cycle by itself in no sort of relation to our emotional transactions with the surrounding world is somehow to impoverish life—so that something is deeply moved in us at the thought of the eccentric dealer who will not sell a fiddle to a man who, as he feels, would not treat it tenderly. But clearly to introduce this factor of sympathy into economics would be to annihilate it as a science; it just is, and must be, the description of that abstracted cycle to which I have referred.

There is yet another reason why the more imaginative type of person tends to distrust the surface conclusions of sociology: he knows by instinct that they can never be effectively brought to bear upon life. The theories of the eugenicist will again serve to illustrate my point. When we study their theories regarding such matters as the destiny of the race, the vicious results of in-breeding, the relative sterility of the upper classes, and the like, we are apt to be so overpowered by the vast scale of the processes which we have been invited to contemplate, that we are easily inclined to forget that all this accumulated information can only be brought to bear upon actual conditions under circumstances of a very special type. The conclusions of experts with regard, say, to the design of the nation's wireless stations, can be put into force by the mechanism of legislation; the citizens of the state are all the time unconsciously giving their sanction to all manner of social developments over which, in theory at least, they have some measure of control. But the nearer we approach to the intimacies of the personal life—by way, let us say, of economics, education, and religion—the more difficult does it become to induce the individual to act in accordance with the principles of pure reason. Finally, in the matter of eugenics, you have the remarkable situation that he is called upon to consider such principles precisely at that crisis in his life when his instincts and passions are most powerfully aroused. He is confronted on the one hand with the carefully written monographs of Prof. Karl Pearson, and on the other with 'that beautiful soul clad in that perfect form, so palpably and flagrantly made from all eternity to be loved.' Is it difficult to see which is destined to obtain the victory?

The more nearly the conclusions of 'science' affect our vital interests the more impossible does it become to induce us to take them into consideration. Creatures of flesh and blood are not going to be led to forgo immediate

economic advantage or the pleasures of sense-gratification simply because they have been informed that certain people in laboratories have discovered that such behaviour will not prove to be to their advantage or—still more remotely—to the advantage of their posterity. The enlightenment which will lead them to act rightly in such momentous matters can by the nature of things *never* be produced by confronting them with a mass of facts regarding a general and abstract state of things. This is not because they lack imagination (as the rationalist likes to conclude), but because they instinctively remain indifferent to unrealities. To force scientific information upon people in the hope that it will serve as a means of changing their hearts is to be guilty of the most unpardonable lack of psychological insight. Concupiscence, which has its seat in the dark roots of the psyche, is only to be destroyed by a force which is equal to it in potency and works, in the same way, within the soul. That force is what used once to be known as the spiritual, and it operates essentially by the instillation of subtle regenerative influences into the very core of the being. The psyche is renewed painfully by an interior process. The effective means of that renewal cannot ever lie in the contemplation of abstract and general considerations which have no living value for the individual, for they must always remain insubstantial relative to the concreteness and intense actuality of those objects (food, money, *this* woman here and now, the antagonist on the opposite side of the table) which serve to arouse the more violent and disturbing passions. It lies, rather, in the working of such agencies as prayer and meditation, the radiation of truth and beauty from a developed personality, the disclosing of the more interior laws of life by superior literature and art.

The attempts of mechanistically-minded social reformers to achieve the same results by what they describe as 'educating us in the duties of citizenship' are only

another expression of their failure to realize where the vital point of the organism is located. It is the old error of the 'utopian' socialists over again: the naïve notion that men's dispositions can be changed by appeals to their reason alone. And they even go farther than this: they entertain the delusion that pre-occupation with these artificialities constitutes a positive achievement—the power of looking at the realities of life with detachment. This, of course, only complicates matters still further, for what they are actually doing is to tear the mind away from the true realities—the data which are vital for the individual personally—and forcing it to torture itself with the consideration of abstractions.

I do not propose to pursue the theme further here. I have said enough, I hope, to show how inevitably mechanical thinking on anthropological problems introduces the spiritual element in life into the equation in such a way that it is robbed of its potency, its influence is arbitrarily localized, or its nature perverted. It is the obliqueness of this attack on transcendental values which makes it so dangerous to the great mass of educated people to-day. The spiritual is denied, not openly, but by implication. And this does not only mean that those people who repudiate its significance can continue in the eyes of the less discerning to enjoy a reputation for clear-headedness and realistic thinking. It means, also, that the ultimate recognition of these deeper values on the part of the world is being retarded to an extreme degree.

TOWARDS AN ORGANIC SOCIETY

I

It remains to consider in this final chapter the problem of the social function of intuition. We have conceived of intuition as the faculty by which the individual becomes aware of what I have described as the movement of life, a movement which may again be resolved into the interplay of the principles of Life-Beauty-Creation and Death-Ugliness-Decay. Further, this awareness is most characteristically expressed in the individual's consciousness of what relates to his own destiny and condition: he becomes aware of the direction in which he can express himself with the greatest completeness.

But self-fulfilment involves co-ordination with the aims of others; the man can only solve his so-called personal problem by placing himself in a proper relation with that which is beyond himself; his private purposes must not conflict ultimately with those of society. The solution which is offered to this problem by the rationalistic type of thinker is comparatively straightforward: the individual consciously aligns himself with the forces which are considered to be working for a General Good, the character of which has been isolated and defined as the result of sociological investigation. In other words, the Ideal is first discovered by research, and the conscientious person then does his best to contribute to making it an actuality. Society is reconstructed in the light of knowledge which, once amassed, is, in theory at least, available to all. Moral effort consists in steadfast adherence to the principles which Science has elucidated for the common benefit. In a word, rationalism assumes that enlightenment comes first and that social action follows.

Intuition, on whatever problem it is brought to bear,

works, as we have seen, in a different manner. The intuitive approach to any question entails always the element of faith, of respect to indications which have to be acted upon before they are verified. And the social question offers no exception to this rule. For while the social reformer invites us to collaborate in the creation of a new type of society, the principles of which have been elaborated as a result of the detached observation of a limited class of facts, of data which appear plausible and reasonable to the scientific intelligence alone, the intuitionist maintains that these facts are of such a nature that they are completely inadequate to such a serious enterprise. He suggests instead that the form which society will assume in the future will only become apparent to men *pari passu* with the discriminating adaptation of each individual to his immediate environment. In other words, he would substitute organic growth for mechanical calculation, and contend that only when the potentialities of personal relationships have to some degree been realized shall we be in a position to gain any true vision of the shape that will be assumed by a living society. The re-creation of the individual implies the transformation of customs, institutions, and social relations.

But how, it may be reasonably enquired, is it possible in any practical sense to create a new order of society the ultimate basis of which is, on this view of the matter, a harmony of individual wills which are, nevertheless, not working for any common aim which is consciously envisaged? The answer which the intuitionist gives to this question is that, by developing a sensitiveness to certain internal admonitions, the individual can render himself capable of collaborating with a great degree of perfection in a far more comprehensive plan than any which he can envisage as the result of scientific enquiry. In other words, without reference to anything beyond his personal experience he can differentiate immediately and decisively

between those of his impulses which are consonant with the good of the Whole and those which are inimical to it; he can isolate from the complex of his inner movements those which will in the end prove to be the most socially creative. I use the phrase 'in the end' advisedly. For, as we have seen, intuitive living means contributing to the liberation of those forces which tend to make for a more fundamental type of harmony. And this process almost inevitably involves conflict with those principles and conclusions which rationalism has evolved just by leaving the important elements in the problem out of account. It means, in fact, performing all sorts of actions which can only be seen as having 'social value' by the person who has the broadest possible vision of what is signified by creative activity. The deeper the individual's understanding of its nature, the less importance will he attach to the careful little amelioristic plans of the social theorist. The purposes of God are mysterious, and to attempt to conform to them is to be compelled to perform actions the 'goodness' and purposiveness of which may, even to the individual himself, only become apparent long afterwards. Perhaps, even, never completely; such is the price which the Divine demands that we should pay for the deep peace which we derive from achieving a coincidence with Its aims.

The notion that the reconstruction of the world should involve such a dependence on inspiration and faith is naturally repugnant to the purely rationalistic intelligence. But it is passionately endorsed by the testimony of the heart. There is no person who has developed his inner life to the smallest degree who does not hold firmly to the belief that if a man will only choose to concentrate his vision imaginatively upon his surroundings, consider the inwardness of events rather than their surface relations—live, in fact, intensively rather than extensively—he will be vouchsafed at least a partial vision of the relation of his own intentions to those of God. Every little world is the

microcosm of a macrocosm. The need for horizontal expansion decreases directly with the degree of vertical penetration which has been achieved, so that a vision of essences more than compensates for the widest conceivable knowledge of concrete facts. In a word, insight dispenses with information.*

By perfecting the local situation in the light of superior intuition we are, *ipso facto*, perfecting the general situation as well, even if its nature is not realized at all fully by the individual. This is the crucial point. The total state of things is constituted by an infinity of minor conjunctures each of which can be solved without any extensive vision of the wider whole. Clearly it would be insane to underrate the importance of those social problems which involve, before everything, collective action. But I feel no obligation to consider them here; they occupy a place well in the foreground of the modern consciousness. What I wish to emphasize in contrast is the enormous significance of the opposite principle: their solution, as it were, in anticipation by the proper conduct of the personal lives of masses of individuals. It is rather as with a crowd at a

* The principle which is involved is, of course, mystical in nature. The intuitive reader will see the point which I am trying to make. I find with interest that an almost identical point of view is expressed in Count Keyserling's newly translated *World in the Making* (1927). He speaks of the ideal man as 'one raised above all opinions, knowing all things directly and perfectly because he stands in necessary and direct relation to the *totality* of the universe.' And again: 'For me this was the final proof that there is no such thing as individual isolation, that each, in reality, represents all, that he who solves his personal problem thereby involuntarily helps everybody else.' — 'The individual, at every moment of his being, actually reflects a cosmic situation' — 'if once a spirit is rightly adjusted to the cosmic relation of things, it cannot help seeing the human relationship of things in their right perspective' — 'henceforth it all depends on *each* individual.'

football match: the good behaviour of the crowd means the good behaviour of each person in it, not in relation to the crowd as a whole (of the existence of which he has only a vague conception), but in relation to the people next to whom he is sitting. The good of the State, as Confucius long ago pointed out, is achieved on the same principle. The most creative social work in which a person can indulge is that of purifying his personal relations through a concentration on his immediate circumstances. The modern sociologist, however, his mind dominated by the problem of correlating forces which are really nothing but the ultimate expression of the solution of an infinity of domestic difficulties, will invariably have it that the world will never be set right until the ordinary rate-paying citizen is more clear as to the whereabouts of Podolia or the disposition of the Yugoslavian frontier. As Solomon has observed, 'the eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth.'

Such is the ground on which the intuitionist would take his stand. It is a position which it is difficult to defend logically, for the simple reason that any attitude which has its basis in feeling must inevitably fare badly when it has to be defended on the rationalistic plane. So that it would, perhaps, be better if, having done what I can to make its nature clear, I left it at that. But I think it may be worth while making an attempt to give a more clear-cut shape to what is, at the best, an elusive conception.

2

It has already appeared that it is the function of intuition to apprehend what is consonant with a given aim, however limited that aim may be; it is the faculty by means of which we realize what contributes, and what is inimical, to the success of a particular enterprise. We

have seen, also, that the achieving of a successful major synthesis may involve the destruction of a perfected minor one; as when the elegant symmetry of the life of a worldling is destroyed by the first workings in him of the yeast of the spirit. The question now arises: How fundamental a social synthesis is the isolated individual capable of working for while yet concentrating on the perfection of his personal life? How wide a range of factors can he take into consideration, as it were, by implication? The question is admittedly extraordinarily difficult to answer.

The value of any ethical code may be fairly accurately measured in terms of the length of the perspectives which have been considered in advance by those by whom it has been framed. Superior morality advocates, for the race as for the individual, what is likely to pay *in the end*. It disclaims opportunism and takes, as we say, a long-term view. Thus the eugenicist, in making his calculations, considers not only the immediate effect of social behaviour, but its repercussion on a posterity which for a less imaginative thinker can hardly be said to exist. On the other hand, the advocate of contraconception (who may, of course, be the same person) endeavours to secure for the population an immediate relief from the burden of economic pressure at the cost of creating in the sphere of morals what some thinkers are inclined, not without justification, to regard as a more fundamental type of disorder. Again, in the sphere of individual morality the spiritual teacher opposes the conclusions of worldly wisdom by an insistence on the significance of those values which belong to eternity rather than to time. So that everything really turns in the end upon the extent to which the factors which are taken into consideration are matters of inner rather than of outer experience. To the degree that we acknowledge their importance we move in our sociological thinking from the rationalistic to the religious plane. Further, as we have already seen,

such 'inner' factors are apprehended by the exercise of the intuition.

The possession of good intuitions must therefore always make a noteworthy difference in the sociological behaviour of the individual. Let me again illustrate the point from eugenics. The eugenists have discovered a large number of the laws which control the hereditary transmission of human characteristics. But even if they were to find out ten times as much they would never be in a position to furnish people with sufficient information to enable them to mate with real discrimination. For there must always be involved all manner of delicate considerations which can only be discerned at the cost of developing a very subtle sense of the inner movement of life. Here once more there comes into play that principle of conforming to a deeper order than any which can be envisaged as the result of scientific investigation alone. Mating is the expression of an urge towards the completion of the imperfect individual, who seeks, before everything, to harmonize the unresolved discords in his being. The process demands attention to the most subtle conceivable considerations. The conclusions of the eugenists may have a certain value in warning the naturally insensitive of certain dangers from which the intuitive person has no need to be protected (we have already seen how dysgenetic behaviour arises from the possession of crude instincts); but if the process of sexual union is to be rendered really discriminating, the masses will have to develop something more than an appetite for reading scientific monographs—namely, superior perception. Once more, it is useless to begin at the periphery instead of at the centre. In so far as a person contrives to transmute his animal nature he comes to achieve something of that knowing of one's self which is the only basis for enlightened living. And to know oneself is to know also what one is consonant with on the plane of inner necessity, to recognize one's spiritual

affinities, to become organic with the rest of the world. It is in the light of this superior consciousness that the lover thrills at the recognition of his destined mate. He knows in the deepest place in his being that in marrying this particular woman he will be co-operating in a process which involves a series of causes and effects stretching back over an incalculable period of time, and extending, also, an infinite distance in the future. The situation is truly momentous, and in dealing with it he is guided more than anything by just this sense of the *spiritual orderliness* of his contemplated action. What he goes by is the *quality* of the situation, for it is precisely through this element of quality that there are presented to the consciousness factors in the problem which are infinitely more far-reaching in their operation than any which are discoverable by science. And it is really time that people who live in laboratories looked this fact in the face.

Nor is it to be denied that unions which are effected in the light of inspiration may sometimes involve a disregard of genetic laws. I have already touched upon the significance of the principle of redemption in this connection. Are we to be *sure* that a marriage which, although it is undesirable from the point of view of the experts, is the expression of refined love, will not make for harmony in the end? A woman who out of the purest instinct in her being seeks—perhaps in the face of all sorts of social, economic, and biological considerations—to become a mother by a certain man is thereby conforming to an urge which may prove to be incomparably more creative than any direction of her maternal impulses in the light of ‘science.’ What of marriages like that of Stavrogin with the cripple-girl in *The Possessed*? Are they to be dismissed offhand as unsound? (And what, by the way, of the degenerate stock which produced the epileptic Dostoevsky himself?) If you are pleased to consider

human beings as so many animals, you will have no compunction in laying down laws as to the respects in which their conduct is sociologically desirable. If, on the other hand, you believe that the individual has within him a centre which is in some mysterious way intimately related to the centre of all being, you will probably hesitate to judge his behaviour in such a peremptory manner.

And here, perhaps, I may call attention to the unsatisfactory position in this matter of the eugenicist who has also religious principles. We find Dean Inge, for instance, attempting to establish at the conclusion of one of his addresses on eugenics some sort of connection between his standpoint in the matter as a priest and his standpoint as a pure scientist. The result is unconvincing, to say the least of it. All that he can find to say is that the Christian ought to sympathize with eugenics because his religion stresses nature at the expense of nurture—and is it not pointed out in the New Testament that an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit? If, however, we then turn to his *Confessio Fidei*, we find him drawing attention to our obligation to ‘purify the eyes of the understanding by constant discipline, to detach ourselves from hampering worldly or fleshly desires, to accustom ourselves to ascend in heart and mind to the kingdom of the eternal values which are the thoughts and purposes of God.’ Further, this process ‘carries with it its own proof and justification, in the increasing clearness and certainty with which the truths of the invisible world are revealed to him who diligently seeks them.’ With all respect to such an eminent authority, I cannot see but that we are here involved in a dilemma. That purified vision which it is the business of the Dean to plead for *qua* priest must surely involve, not merely the recognition of the value of those principles which he is elaborating *qua* eugenicist, but also the power to dispense with them

altogether—or at least to dispense with them to a very great extent. Surely the truth about human biological relationships in so far as it is ascertainable by the *natural* understanding must be less profound than the truth about them which is revealed to the *spiritual* understanding? If we open our hearts to God we can be assured of being directed in this most delicate of undertakings in the light of a wisdom infinitely greater than any which is derived from considering scientific theories which are by definition never strictly applicable to the individual case. In fine, the Christian, to the extent that his spiritual centre is open to the divine influx, becomes independent of all those statistics, monographs, and manuals of economics or 'citizenship' on which the ordinary person is supposed to rely for instruction in the art of social behaviour. I agree that many people are so remote from any gleam of the divine consciousness that a certain amount of education in these matters may not come amiss, attended though it is by the danger of suggesting the self-sufficingness of human reason. But I wish also, on the other hand, to bring out the fact that it is impossible to press hard upon the principle of the latent divinity in man without at the same time considerably diminishing the force of an appeal which is seen to be made in the end to uninspired reason. We are safe in putting our trust in God. This does not mean, of course, that our intuitions will tell us anything *directly* about the hereditary consequences of epilepsy or alcoholism; but they will give us a clear and immediate indication as to whether *we*—for whom, after all, all this agitation is being made in the end—should be in spiritual disorder in marrying a person who was afflicted by such a disease. And that should suffice. Of course, the recognition by a person of the significance of the very limited type of facts obtainable by scientific enquiry may fairly be considered to constitute an expression of that reason in man which is also an attribute of the divine. But the fact

remains that spiritual intuition, even when developed to no very exalted degree, tends to dispense with the cumbersome methods of the discursive mind.

3

In what has gone before I have laid emphasis repeatedly on the *partial* nature of what the scientific investigator is accustomed to refer to as 'the facts.' It is now necessary to consider this circumstance once more from the point of view of our present discussion.

There is, I hope, nothing very outrageous in the suggestion that nothing really effective will ever be done in the way of reforming the world until *all the facts* are taken into consideration. This is the only basis on which even such a humble institution as a home can safely be built, and it is not going too far to assume that the same principle applies equally to the State.

But who knows 'all the facts'? Certainly not Science. For what Science has to offer us is, at the best, a collection of estimates, conjectures, and suppositions which are based on information which is invariably at second or third hand. Scientific knowledge about human beings is of necessity 'my experience as it is for you' and 'your experience as it is for me,' but never 'my experience as it is for *me*.' To put the matter in plainer terms, the greater part of those facts about life which must be taken into consideration if ever a stable social order is to be created consists of the *inside* information which each individual has about himself and his circumstances. This being the case, it follows that the only social reform which is truly realistic is that which is based upon each person's shaping his life in accordance with that precious knowledge which he alone possesses, and doing this in the light of an inspiration which, as we have seen already, will lead him to ends which cannot conflict with

those of his fellow-men. This seems to be the only way in which life can be dealt with centrally and not at a remove. And herein, incidentally, lies the educative power of Art and Religion as opposed to that of Science. Both exhibit this interest in *all* the circumstances of the case. Both concentrate on consciousness, on the centre of the web of associations and impulses in which the individual passes his existence. Both are concerned with the heart of life, with the only truth that matters in the end, because it is the only truth which has been arrived at as a result of balancing up all the factors involved. And that is why the artist and the mystic can move men's hearts, but the sociologist can only puzzle their heads.

It is important to understand what is implied by social reform in accordance with the findings of Science, the method of which consists in the application to communal life of principles which have been arrived at through dispassionate enquiry. It is extremely difficult to see how the process can ultimately entail anything less than the control of life by a group of technical experts. Further, it will imply also that education will consist very largely in the learning by the great mass of the population of what these experts have come to regard as being true, for on this basis the judgment of the private and untrained individual on almost any problem, social or personal, will inevitably, with the advance of knowledge, become of almost negligible significance compared to that of the specialist who bases his conclusions upon a survey of an infinitely wider range of evidence. In other words, the individual will be perpetually threatened, even in dealing with the most intimate questions, with having to make decisions which are based on evidence which is too elaborate or voluminous for him to master by himself. And that from the spiritual point of view signifies something so serious that only the most unimaginative person can contemplate the prospect without consternation.

Mercifully, however, this ideal is not capable of realization. The most intimate and significant facts of all, those through attention to which everything that is important in life is in the end determined, must ever slip through the coarse net of the statistician. On this matter I have already said more than enough elsewhere. What I wish to return to here, however, is the point that Science, when applied to the conduct of the individual life, breaks down in that it can never deal with the individual situation *centrally*.

We have already seen that the scientist considers the individual in terms of general conceptions. He handles him, as it were, in bits, as a type of this or that, just as the State deals with a man *qua* car-owner, *qua* ex-officer, *qua* householder, etc. But there is one element in the situation—and it happens to be the most important of all—which he can never take into consideration in his calculations, and that is the way in which all the different points about the man are combined in his particular case. However many authorities combine to describe the different features which he exhibits, mental, psychic, and physical, there is only one person who can envisage them all at once from a central situation—and that is the man himself.

What do we mean when we say that a person is living a life of serenity and enlightenment? Surely nothing less than that he is maintaining a successful equilibrium between the different proclivities and passions in his nature. Whoever he may be, he stands, completely alone, at the centre of a web which is woven of the most delicate imaginable filaments, filaments which connect him, in the form of curiosities, affections, repulsions, sympathies, familiarities, aspirations, and intentions, with a small but an infinitely rich and variegated world. It may well be—particularly if he is what we have chosen to designate as a 'commonplace' person—that the greater number of

these threads are of an ordinary, familiar type, both as regards texture, disposition, and extent. It may be true also that, looked at from that oblique angle from which alone we can view it, the web appears to be uninteresting and conventional in design. But the fact remains that it can only be seen in a true perspective by the individual in whose heart its multitudinous threads find their common centre. He alone is in a position to estimate the quality, the intensiveness, and the power of the impulses which reach him along these gossamer strands; he alone is aware of what, on the other hand, is passing out along them from the centre of his being. Most important of all, he is the sole person who is able to maintain a proper equilibrium between the countless forces which are involved. Mr H. G. Wells has pointed out somewhere that an apparently insuperable objection to the direct measurement of health is to be found in the fact that health, so far from being a definite state—like that, for instance, of toxic poisoning, which can be attributed to an assignable physical cause—consists rather in the preservation of a successful balance between a number of conflicting tendencies. It is this poise which is the important element in the matter. And the poise is of the same order and produces the same beneficial results, however much the forces to be equalized vary with the individual. It is like an equilateral triangle, which remains such whether it be drawn with pencil, crayon, or ink.

Now, it seems to me that what might be termed the autonomous government of the individual is of very much the same order. He is the only person who knows all the facts, and he alone can prescribe for himself effectively. Science may classify a very small number of the threads which bind him to the world, but he is the sole person who can look along them all from the centre at which they meet. It is true that at a given moment an individual may be unable to take full advantage of the unique

position which he thus occupies. His little private exchange may be in temporary disorder; he hears several messages at the same time, can get no reply along certain lines, or fails to make due use of others. This is the point at which the spiritual physician may be called in with advantage. But the fact remains that, once health has been restored, the man, however undeveloped he may be, is the only person who is finally qualified to take control of that particular exchange.

4

The conception which we have arrived at, then, is that of a re-creation of society which is achieved by the activity of a myriad true centres instead of one artificial one. I would make it clear that a re-ordering of communal life on these lines has absolutely nothing to do either with any theory regarding the metaphysical nature of the State or with the question of the political organization of society. The province of the science of politics, properly conceived, is that of securing the most perfect possible adjustment between the 'wants' of different types of individuals and associations. The influences which determine the extent and character of such 'wants' are exerted upon an altogether different and more interior plane of being. To the extent that the active impulses of the mass of the population become purified, their desires will cease to be at variance with those of their neighbours; the essential feature of a spiritual society is that the will of the individual does not conflict with that of his fellow-man. The logical end of education is the creation of a type of social order in which such institutions as charters, bills of right, treaties, and arbitration commissions would be anachronisms. This, however, represents only the ideal end of a process. While human beings remain what they are we shall continue to be in need of the services of specialists

in the problem of mutual accommodation. But it is desirable to bear in mind that their function is one that involves no creative principle. The art of adjusting the claims between a mass of conflicting individual wills is necessarily exercised in the interests of those wills themselves; its ultimate inspiration is that of calculating egoism, which makes concessions only for the sake of securing an advantage at another point. However ingenious the accommodation which is achieved, the fact remains that its existence is, in one sense, the expression of a failure of the human spirit.

In practice a social life on an intuitive basis would mean that the individual would regulate his life in the light of principles of a certain order—those that serve to illuminate the nature of that thing in him which is involved in every situation which he encounters, that help him to understand the nature of those centres in his being from which he is bound to act wherever he is and whatever he is doing. Further, their application to life will involve, unless the thesis of this book is completely fallacious, a combination of mental vigilance and that delicacy of perception which we are at present inclined to regard as the monopoly of the artist. This last point is of the first importance.

Somewhere in his *Soul of Man under Socialism*, Oscar Wilde has dropped the profound suggestion that 'the future is what artists are.' His words recall, of course, those of Stevenson to the effect that 'art is not painting pictures or practising the piano; it is a life to be lived.' And anybody can further collect for himself numbers of statements of the same tenor which have been made by artists at different times. To the scientific type of thinker such utterances may readily appear to be of a merely rhetorical or fanciful nature. To the person who realizes the significance of the function of intuition they are, on the contrary, of the greatest importance.

One of the most pernicious mental habits which we have acquired as a result of the over-development of our systematizing minds is that of dividing up life and activity into all sorts of rigidly delimited provinces. That of Art is, perhaps, the most arbitrarily conceived of them all. The sociologists, as we have seen, take it for granted that the artist is the man who has, like everyone else in the State, a definite job to do—in this case that of writing poems, painting pictures, or composing music. That is his 'function,' as we say, just as the function of the brick-layer is that of laying bricks. But to look at the matter in this light is to see it in a wrong perspective.

The trouble comes from the fact that we have confused consciousness and expression. What is an artist? Surely a person who stands out from the ruck, firstly, on account of possessing the gift of expressing his feelings, and, secondly, through his having in a more heightened form that consciousness of beauty and fitness which we all to some extent possess, although not in a sufficient degree to justify us in attempting to embody it in an art form. If we did not all share this consciousness, art would have no message for us and the 'function' of the artist would disappear. Unfortunately, however, the whole development of our ideas regarding art has been towards emphasis on the first feature—that of the talent of the artist, and away from a due recognition of the second—the universality of the perceptions on the basis of which he is working. This has led us into making a serious, and to my mind unjustifiable, assumption: the assumption that the sole appropriate medium for the expression of a consciousness of certain deeper aspects of life is that of artistic creation.

What we have done is to localize the function of superior sensibility. Directly we encounter in an individual anything like fineness of perception, a marked sense of beauty, or a gift of rhythmic expression, we rush

off with the idea that he must be isolated from the crowd of masons, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and shipwrights who together make up the population of the world, and be given the opportunity to express his elevated feelings in terms of artistic creation. But does it follow that because such qualities are necessary for the production of art they can be utilized for no other purpose? I would submit that before we come to such a conclusion we should first explore the possibilities of their expression in life.

If we consider the object of the artist's attention, we see that it consists of a mass of delicate and ever-changing relationships the greater part of which are such that they cannot be clearly defined. The function of art is that of expressing them by the aid of symbols. But whether the artist does this for us or not, they still exist; and we are often capable of recognizing them for ourselves. We have all in different degrees the sense of all kinds of vital, if elusive, connections between people and things, connections which we are compelled to respect if we are to live deeply and truthfully. Moreover, such connections, unlike those which are established between objects by science, are closely associated with our profound enjoyment of existence; they define the directions in which life flows sweetly and powerfully. To attempt to make use of any system of communications less imaginatively conceived is to be met with obstructions, to lose touch with immediacies, to pass into a grey, unreal world.

What people need to realize is that there are infinitely richer possibilities of creating beauty in terms of life than there are in terms of paint, musical notes, or verbal traceries. Human beings, if the fact could only be brought home to the world, constitute the raw material for symphonies, tone poems, rhapsodies, and architectonic splendours incomparably more magnificent than any hitherto created by the Three Arts. From what, in fact, does the

artist draw his inspiration but the possibilities which he perceives to be latent in the human spirit? The final aim of social life is the *living out* of what is at present only symbolized by Art. And to the extent to which this living out is accomplished by the individual, morality becomes for him a delight. That delight is derived from a perennial interest in vivid, concrete, and ever-changing situations which are yet contemplated in the light of clearly cut principles—the only type of interest which can continue to hold the attention of a fully conscious human being. Why is it that the conclusions of the sociologist depress us while those of the chemist or geologist do not? Because we feel instinctively that the sociologist is illegitimately introducing an element of forbidding detachment into a region in which interest and excitement—the excitement of dealing with life in its most highly individualized form—should be one. On the other hand, the precision of the geologist is felt to be deeply appropriate to the rigid and mechanical nature of his subject-matter, so we are not offended.

5

But the state of the world at present is such that only a small minority has any clear conception of the possibilities of really creative living. The greater number of those people who are able to rise above the level of inertia and routine expend their energies in 'constructive activities' which, although they involve an enormous amount of bustling about on the surface, really only serve to bring about a more profound state of internal disorder. On this point, however, I have already said enough. Let me only suggest here that when, one day, we realize the possibilities of life, neither as a panorama, nor as a playground, nor as something to be engineered by straining the faculties of the mind while neglecting the testimony of the

instincts, the foundation will be laid for the creation of a new type of society, a society which is not mechanical, but rather organic, in structure. That is to say, its form could be seen as the crystallization of the combined impulses of enlightened individualism. It would be of the nature of a tree rather than of a machine. It would represent the richest conceivable flowering of the personal life. Yet at the same time it would be organized on a level infinitely more profound than that on which society is ordered to-day. For it would be disposed in accordance with those affinities between people and objects which can only be discerned by love, by love expressing itself in taste, æsthetic judgment, a sense of fitness and consonance. Relationships would be organic rather than adventitious or conditioned by the claims of material interest. The flow of life between men and women would be living, and appropriate to their true relative positions. Association would be creative instead of casual, responsibilities distributed in accordance with a deeper justice.

But if all this is to be achieved as the result of following our instincts and intuitions, we are, I shall be told, in no better position. Have we not abundant evidence to show that transcendentalism is attended by even greater dangers than is that humanism on which the ordinary reformer takes his stand? The contention is reasonable enough. All cautious thinkers are justified in regarding anything of the kind with the greatest apprehension. Nothing could be more apparent than the fact that, although the path of inward illumination, like that of Stoicism, or proto-Taoism, can be safely trodden by an enlightened minority, for the mass of men traffic with God directly, neither through the intermediary of a Church, nor subject to correction by humanistic principles, involves every type of ghostly peril. Pantheism, antinomianism, pseudo-ecstasy, morbid hallucination, not to speak of 'blessed idiocy'—the list is familiar and for-

midable enough. We may fully sympathize with Prof. Irving Babbitt in his inclination to a humanistic rather than to a religious solution of the social problem. It is impossible not to observe 'the endless self-deception to which man is subject when he tries to pass too abruptly from the naturalistic to the religious level,' and we may go a long way with him as well in concluding that 'the world would have been a better place if more persons had made sure they were human before setting out to be superhuman.' Why not, in fact, play for safety by sticking to humanism and leaving inspiration alone?

The answer which I would make to this suggestion is simply the following: There is an increasing amount of evidence to show that the attack on the position from the purely humanistic angle is failing to achieve its object. The method of dealing with the problem by that combination of resourceful planning and vaguely directed goodwill which we have analysed in these pages is breaking down at every point. We have still, in fact, to produce a convincing reply to that challenge to Western civilization which was thrown out by Dostoevsky half a century ago, and which I have placed at the beginning of this book. I suggest, therefore, that there is nothing unrealistic in suggesting in the year 1928 that we should consider the possibilities which are inherent in building up society on a consciously recognized spiritual basis. Such a way out of our difficulties may appear to make impossible demands on our individual behaviour. But I would ask those who recoil from it if there is any convincing reason, in the light of the experience of the last century, for thinking that the sole practical solution of the terrible problem of social life may not be just that which, since it involves the personal regeneration of the individual, appears to be the most difficult of all to achieve. Naturalism has always sought for an answer to the questions put by life which shall be easy, swift, and

readily comprehensible. Religion, on the contrary, has invariably insisted on the travail which is required to bring forth truth and goodness, on the essential mystery which underlies all appearances. What I would submit is that even though this second way out of the difficulty is still problematical, there is surely little audacity in venturing to suggest it at a juncture when all other solutions have so palpably failed us. Coleridge has remarked in *The Friend* that perhaps the most marked characteristic of the human animal is its incorrigible tendency to seek everywhere for short cuts. Is it not time that we realized that the patient ingenuity - vague humanism formula on which we are at present working is a device of this order?

A defence of the mystical attack on the modern problem does not belong to the plan of this work. But it is not out of place to put forward the following suggestion.

The characteristic element in the history of the last century has been the enormous movement that has taken place in all fields in the direction of release, opening up, emancipation. The mental outlook which we have inherited from the Victorians is coloured to an extreme degree with this consciousness of overcoming resistances, opening doors, removing abuses—in general, allowing things to get out into the daylight. Liberalism, which is the key-note of the age through which we have passed, only really thrives—however much its advocates may strive to present it as a positive element in life—when it is a question of resisting pressure from the outside. Once the tyrants have been overthrown, the embargos on education, sexual freedom, and political and religious liberty removed, the liberal's task is practically over. What I would submit is that we are at present rapidly approaching the end of that process of striking off fetters which played such a part in determining the labours of the last generation. The type of progress which so captivated the Vic-

torian imagination has almost reached its culmination. I do not mean, I need hardly say, that there are not still thousands of serious abuses which demand rectification. But I think that it is becoming evident to reflective minds that our vital modern problem is not so much that of securing liberty as that of dealing with its abuse. What we are confronted with in the present epoch is the logical conclusion of the principle of *laissez-faire*. We are realizing that a state of things in which everybody is free (to adapt a famous phrase of Matthew Arnold's) to read what he likes, conceive of God as he likes, spend his money as he likes, make love as he likes, is latent with infinitely more disastrous possibilities than one in which everybody was maintained in a state of unremitting bondage by ecclesiastical and temporal authority.

With this shifting of the centre of gravity the need is arising for the services of a thinker of a new type. The modern problem is not that of liberating the subject from the bonds which have been laid upon him by material tyrants, but that of releasing him from a servitude infinitely more degrading and perilous—his enslavement by his own private passions and desires. Our task is that of somehow checking the enormous orgy of self-gratification which is at present being indulged in by all sections of the population all over the world. As I have repeatedly suggested in these pages, that control will only be established by dealing with the evil at its source in the human psyche. And it is, therefore, the people who have a right to the title of psychologist in a far deeper sense than it can be claimed by the modern orthodox practitioners of the science who will really count in the period which is immediately before us. The attempts which we have been considering to deal with the problem on the level of pure mechanism are, I am convinced, doomed to failure. In spite of all the appearances to the contrary, they belong to the order of phantasy rather than to that of

realistic thinking. Further, I believe that large and increasing numbers of people all over the world are becoming convinced that it cannot be done this way. They are turning instead to the cultivation of the inner life, because they realize, with different degrees of completeness, that we must at all costs begin again at the beginning. And it is as a modest contribution to that enterprise that I would offer this book.

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